

Selected Love Lyrics



CONTAINING POEMS FROM
India's Love Lyrics

Stars of the Desert & Last Poems

LAURENCE HOPE

SELECTED LOVE LYRICS

by Laurence Hope

Laurence Hope was the author of three widely read books of verse: *India's Love Lyrics*; *Stars of the Desert* and *Last Poems*. Here the most popular poems from these three books have been included in a single volume of *Selected Love Lyrics*, with a frontispiece and jacket in full color by Byam Shaw. Throughout these poems the reader will find the tropical luxuriance and Sapphic fervor which has caught the attention of hundreds of thousands of readers wherever the poetry of love and passion is read.

"Laurence Hope has caught admirably the dominating notes of this Indian love poetry—its delicious absorption in the instant, its out-of-door air, its melancholy. Slender brown limbs stir silently in the garden where the flying foxes cross the moon; in the hot, jasmine-scented jungle, among the pink almond blossoms of Kandahar. And always there is the poignant sense of the fleetness of love—a moment's salvage from the flux of years.

—*The Athenaeum*

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Jane Moore

Selected Love Lyrics



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The Garden of Kama

Selected Love Lyrics

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India's Love Lyrics

Stars of the Desert

Last Poems

By

Laurence Hope

FRONTISPIECE BY BYAM SHAW

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"Less than the Dust"

LESS than the dust, beneath thy Chariot wheel,
Less than the rust, that never stained thy Sword,
Less than the trust thou hast in me, O Lord,
Even less than these!

Less than the weed, that grows beside thy door,
Less than the speed of hours spent far from thee,
Less than the need thou hast in life of me.
Even less am I.

Since I, O Lord, am nothing unto thee,
See here thy Sword, I make it keen and bright,
Love's last reward, Death, comes to me to-night,
Farewell, Zahir-u-din.

Reverie of Mahomed Akram at the Tamarind Tank

THE Desert is parched in the burning sun
And the grass is scorched and white.
But the sand is passed, and the march is done,
We are camping here to-night.

I sit in the shade of the Temple walls,
While the cadenced water evenly falls,
And a peacock out of the Jungle calls
To another, on yonder tomb.

Above, half seen, in the lofty gloom,
Strange works of a long dead people loom,
Obscene and savage and half effaced—
An elephant hunt, a musicians' feast—
And curious matings of man and beast;
What did they mean to the men who are long since dust?

Whose fingers traced,
In this arid waste,
These rioting, twisted, figures of love and lust?

Strange, weird things that no man may say,
Things Humanity hides away;—
Secretly done,—

Catch the light of the living day,
Smile in the sun.
Cruel things that man may not name,
Naked here, without fear or shame,
Laughed in the carven stone.

Deep in the Temple's innermost Shrine is set,
Where the bats and shadows dwell,
The worn and ancient Symbol of Life, at rest
In its oval shell,
By which the men, who, of old, the land possessed,
Represented their Great Destroying Power.
I cannot forget
That, just as my life was touching its fullest flower,
Love came and destroyed it all in a single hour,
Therefore the dual Mystery suits me well.

Sitting alone,
The tank's deep water is cool and sweet,
Soothing and fresh to the wayworn feet,
Dreaming, under the Tamarind shade,
One silently thanks the men who made
So green a place in this bitter land
Of sunburnt sand.

The peacocks scream and the grey Doves coo,
Little green, talkative Parrots woo,
And small grey Squirrels, with fear askance,
At alien me, in their furtive glance,

Come shyly, with quivering fur, to see
The stranger under their Tamarind tree.

Daylight dies,
The Camp fires redden like angry eyes,
The Tents show white,
In the glimmering light,
Spirals of tremulous smoke arise, to the purple skies,
And the hum of the Camp sounds like the sea,
Drifting over the sand to me.
Afar, in the Desert some wild voice sings
To a jangling zither with minor strings,
And, under the stars growing keen above,
I think of the thing that I love.

A beautiful thing, alert, serene,
With passionate, dreaming, wistful eyes,
Dark and deep as mysterious skies,
Seen from a vessel at sea.
Alas, you drifted away from me,
And Time and Space have rushed in between,
But they cannot undo the Thing-that-has-been,
Though it never again may be.
You were mine, from dusk until dawning light,
For the perfect whole of that bygone night
You belonged to me!

They say that Love is a light thing,
A foolish thing and a slight thing,

A ripe fruit, rotten at core;
They speak in this futile fashion
To me, who am wracked with passion,
Tormented beyond compassion,
For ever and ever more.

They say that Possession lessens a lover's delight,
As radiant mornings fade into afternoon.
I held what I loved in my arms for many a night,
Yet ever the morning lightened the sky too soon.

Beyond our tents the sands stretch level and far,
Around this little oasis of Tamarind trees.
A curious, Eastern fragrance fills the breeze
From the ruinous Temple garden where roses are.

I dream of the rose-like perfume that fills your hair,
Of times when my lips were free of your soft closed eyes,
While down in the tank the waters ripple and rise
And the flying foxes silently cleave the air.

The present is subtly welded into the past,
My love of you with the purple Indian dusk,
With its clinging scent of sandal incense and musk,
And withering jasmin flowers.

My eyes grow dim and my senses fail at last,
While the lonely hours
Follow each other, silently, one by one,
Till the night is almost done.

Then weary, and drunk with dreams, with my garments
damp

And heavy with dew, I wander towards the camp.

Tired, with a brain in which fancy and fact are blent,

I stumble across the ropes till I reach my tent

And then to rest. To ensweeten my sleep with lies,

To dream I lie in the light of your long lost eyes,

My lips set free,

To love and linger over your soft loose hair—

To dream I lay your delicate beauty bare

To solace my fevered eyes.

Ah,—if my life might end in a night like this—

Drift into death from dreams of your granted kiss!

Song of Khan Zada

As one may sip a Stranger's Bowl
You gave yourself but not your soul.
I wonder, now that time has passed,
Where you will come to rest at last.

You gave your beauty for an hour,
I held it gently as a flower,
You wished to leave me, told me so,
I kissed your feet and let you go.

The Teak Forest

WHETHER I loved you who shall say?
Whether I drifted down your way
In the endless River of Chance and Change,
And you woke the strange
Unknown longings that have no names,
But burn us all in their hidden flames,
Who shall say?

Life is a strange and a wayward thing:
We heard the bells of the Temples ring,
The married children, in passing, sing.
The month of marriage, the month of spring,
Was full of the breath of sunburnt flowers
That bloom in a fiercer light than ours,
And, under a sky more fiercely blue,
I came to you!

You told me tales of your vivid life
Where death was cruel and danger rife—
Of deep dark forests, of poisoned trees,
Of pains and passions that scorch and freeze,
Of southern noontides and eastern nights,
Where love grew frantic with strange delights,

While men were slaying and maidens danced,
Till I, who listened, lay still, entranced.
Then, swift as a swallow heading south,
I kissed your mouth!

One night when the plains were bathed in blood
From sunset light in a crimson flood,
We wandered under the young teak trees
Whose branches whined in the light night breeze;
You led me down to the water's brink,
"The Spring where the Panthers come to drink
At night; there is always water here
Be the season never so parched and sere."
Have we souls of beasts in the forms of men?
I fain would have tasted your life-blood then.

The night fell swiftly; this sudden land
Can never lend us a twilight strand
'Twixt the daylight shore and the ocean night,
But takes—as it gives—at once, the light.
We laid us down on the steep hillside,
While far below us wild peacocks cried,
And we sometimes heard, in the sunburnt grass,
The stealthy steps of the Jungle pass.
We listened; knew not whether they went
On love or hunger the more intent.
And under your kisses I hardly knew
Whether I loved or hated you.

But your words were flame and your kisses fire.
And who shall resist a strong desire?
Not I, whose life is a broken boat
On a sea of passions, adrift, afloat.
And, whether I came in love or hate,
That I came to you was written by Fate
In every hue of the blood-red sky,
In every tone of the peacocks' cry.

While every gust of the Jungle night
Was fanning the flame you had set alight.
For these things have power to stir the blood
And compel us all to their own chance mood.
And to love or not we are no more free
Than a ripple to rise and leave the sea.

We are ever and always slaves of these,
Of the suns that scorch and the winds that freeze
Of the faint sweet scents of the sultry air,
Of the half heard howl from the far off lair.
These chance things master us ever. Compel
To the heights of Heaven, the depths of Hell.

Whether I love you? You do not ask,
Nor waste yourself on the thankless task.
I give your kisses at least return,
What matter whether they freeze or burn.
I feel the strength of your fervent arms,
What matter whether it heals or harms.

You are wise; you take what the Gods have sent.
You ask no question, but rest content
So I am with you to take your kiss,
And perhaps I value you more for this.
For this is Wisdom; to love, to live,
To take what Fate, or the Gods, may give,
To ask no question, to make no prayer,
To kiss the lips and caress the hair,
Speed passion's ebb as you greet its flow,—
To have,—to hold,—and,—in time,—let go!

And this is our Wisdom: we rest together
On the great lone hills in the storm-filled weather
And watch the skies as they pale and burn,
The golden stars in their orbits turn,
While Love is with us, and Time and Peace,
And life has nothing to give but these.
But, whether you love me, who shall say,
Or whether you, drifting down my way
In the great sad River of Chance and Change,
With your looks so weary and words so strange,
Lit my soul from some hidden flame
To a passionate longing without a name,
 Who shall say?
Not I, who am but a broken boat,
Content for a while to drift afloat
In the little noontide of love's delights
 Between two Nights.

Valgovind's Boat Song

*W*ATERS glisten and sunbeams quiver,
The wind blows fresh and free.
Take my boat to your breast, O River!
Carry me out to Sea!

This land is laden with fruit and grain,
With never a place left free for flowers,
A fruitful mother; but I am fain
For brides in their early bridal hours.

Take my boat to your breast, O River!
Carry me out to Sea!

The Sea, beloved by a thousand ships,
Is maiden ever, and fresh and free.
Ah, for the touch of her cool green lips,
Carry me out to Sea!

Take my boat to your breast, dear River,
And carry it out to Sea!

Zira: in Captivity

LOVE me a little, Lord, or let me go,
I am so weary walking to and fro
Through all your lonely halls that were so sweet
Did they but echo to your coming feet.

When by the flowered scrolls of lace-like stone—
Our women's windows—I am left alone,
Across the yellow Desert, looking forth,
I see the purple hills towards the north.

Behind those jagged Mountains' lilac crest
Once lay the captive bird's small rifled nest.
There was my brother slain, my sister bound;
His blood, her tears, drunk by the thirsty ground.

Then, while the burning village smoked on high,
And desecrated all the peaceful sky,
They took us captive, us, born frank and free,
On fleet, strong camels through the sandy sea.

Yet, when we rested, night-times, on the sand
By the rare waters of this dreary land,
Our captors, ere the camp was wrapped in sleep,
Talked, and I listened, and forgot to weep.

"Is he not brave and fair?" they asked, "our King,
Slender as one tall palm-tree by a spring;
Erect, serene, with gravely brilliant eyes,
As deeply dark as are these desert skies.

"Truly no bitter fate," they said, and smiled,
"Awaits the beauty of this captured child!"
Then something in my heart began to sing,
And secretly I longed to see the King.

Sometimes the other maidens sat in tears,
Sometimes, consoled, they jested at their fears,
Musing what lovers Time to them would bring;
But I was silent, thinking of the King.

Till, when the weary endless sands were passed.
When, far to south, the city rose at last,
All speech forsook me and my eyelids fell,
Since I already loved my Lord so well.

Then the division: some were sent away
To merchants in the city; some, they say,
To summer palaces, beyond the walls.
But me they took straight to the Sultan's halls.

Every morning I would wake and say
"Ah, sisters, shall I see our Lord to-day?"
The women robed me, perfumed me, and smiled;
"When were his feet unfleet to pleasure, child?"

And tales they told me of his deeds in war,
Of how his name was revered afar;
And, crouching closer in the lamp's faint glow,
They told me of his beauty, speaking low.

What need, what need? the women wasted art;
I love you with every fibre of my heart
Already. My God! when did I *not* love you,
In life, in death, when shall I not love you?

You never seek me. All day long I lie
Watching the changes of the far-off sky
Behind the lattice-work of carven stone.
And all night long, alas! I lie alone.

But you come never. Ah, my Lord the King,
How can you find it well to do this thing?
Come once, come only: sometimes, as I lie,
I doubt if I shall see you first, or die.

Ah, could I hear your footsteps at the door
Hallow the lintel and caress the floor,
Then I might drink your beauty, satisfied,
Die of delight, ere you could reach my side.

Alas, you come not, Lord: life's flame burns low,
Faint for a loveliness it may not know,
Faint for your face, oh, come—come soon to me—
Lest, though you should not, Death should, set me free!

Mahomed Akram's Appeal to the Stars

O_H, Silver Stars that shine on what I love,
Touch the soft hair and sparkle in the eyes,—
Send, from your calm serenity above,
Sleep to whom, sleepless, here, despairing lies.

Broken, forlorn, upon the Desert sand
That sucks these tears, and utterly abased,
Looking across the lonely, level land,
With thoughts more desolate than any waste.

Planets that shine on what I so adore,
Now thrown, the hour is late, in careless rest,
Protect that sleep, which I may watch no more,
I, the cast out, dismissed and dispossessed.

Far in the hillside camp, in slumber lies
What my worn eyes worship but never see.
Happier Stars! your myriad silver eyes
Feast on the quiet face denied to me.

Loved with a love beyond all words or sense,
Lost with a grief beyond the saltiest tear,
So lovely, so removed, remote, and hence
So doubly and so desperately dear!

Stars! from your skies so purple and so calm,
That through the centuries your secrets keep,
Send to this worn-out brain some Occult Balm,
Send me, for many nights so sleepless, sleep.

And ere the sunshine of the Desert jars
My sense with sorrow and another day,
Through your soft Magic, oh, my Silver Stars!
Turn sleep to Death in some mysterious way.

Story by Lalla-ji, the Priest

HE loved the Plant with a keen delight,
A passionate fervour, strange to see,
Tended it ardently, day and night,
Yet never a flower lit up the tree.

The leaves were succulent, thick, and green,
And, sessile, out of the snakelike stem
Rose spine-like fingers, alert and keen,
To catch at aught that molested them.

But though they nurtured it day and night,
With love and labour, the child and he
Were never granted the longed-for sight
Of a flower crowning the twisted tree.

Until one evening a wayworn Priest
Stopped for the night in the Temple shade
And shared the fare of their simple feast
Under the vines and the jasmin laid.

He, later, wandering round the flowers
Paused awhile by the blossomless tree.

The man said, "May it be fault of ours,
That never its buds my eyes may see?

"Aslip it came from the further East
Many a sunlit summer ago."

"It grows in our Jungles," said the Priest,
"Men see it rarely; but this I know,

"The Jungle people worship it; say
They bury a child around its roots—
Bury it living;—the only way
To crimson glory of flowers and fruits."

He spoke in whispers; his furtive glance
Probing the depths of the garden shade.
The man came closer, with eyes askance,
The child beside them shivered, afraid.

A cold wind drifted about the three,
Jarring the spines with a hungry sound,
The spines that grew on the snakelike tree
And guarded its roots beneath the ground.

.

After the fall of the summer rain
The plant was glorious, redly gay,
Blood-red with blossom. Never again
Men saw the child in the Temple play.

Request

GIVE me yourself one hour; I do not crave
For any love, or even thought, of me.
Come, as a Sultan may caress a slave
And then forget for ever, utterly.

Come! as west winds, that passing, cool and wet,
O'er desert places, leave them fields in flower
And all my life, for I shall not forget,
Will keep the fragrance of that perfect hour!

*Story of Udaipore:
Told by Lalla-ji, the Priest*

"*AND* when the Summer Heat is great,
And every hour intense,
The Moghra, with its subtle flowers,
Intoxicates the sense."

The Coco palms stood tall and slim, against the golden-
glow,
And all their grey and graceful plumes were waving to and
fro.

She lay forgetful in the boat, and watched the dying Sun
Sink slowly lakewards, while the stars replaced him, one
by one.

She saw the marble Temple walls long white reflections
make,
The echoes of their silvery bells were thrown across the
lake.

The evening air was very sweet; from off the island bowers
Came scents of Moghra trees in bloom, and Oleander
flowers.

"The Moghra flowers that smell so sweet
When love's young fancies play;
The acrid Moghra flowers, still sweet
Though love be burnt away."

The boat went drifting, uncontrolled, the rower rowed no
more,
But deftly turned the slender prow towards the further
shore.

The dying sunset touched with gold the Jasmin in his hair;
His eyes were darkly luminous: she looked and found him
fair.

And so persuasively he spoke, she could not say him nay,
And when his young hands took her own, she smiled and let
them stay.

And all the youth awoke in him, all love of Love in her,
All scents of white and subtle flowers that filled the twilight
air

Combined together with the night in kind conspiracy
To do Love service, while the boat went drifting onwards,
free.

"The Moghra flowers, the Moghra flowers,
While Youth's quick pulses play

They are so sweet, they still are sweet,
Though passion burns away."

Low in the boat the lovers lay, and from his sable curls
The Jasmin flowers slipped away to rest among the girl's.

Oh, silver lake and silver night and tender silver sky!
Where as the hours passed, the moon rose white and cold on
high.

"The Moghra flowers, the Moghra flowers,
So dear to Youth at play;
The small and subtle Moghra flowers
That only last a day."

Suddenly, frightened, she awoke, and waking vaguely saw
The boat had stranded in the sedge that fringed the further
shore.

The breeze grown chilly, swayed the palms; she heard, still
half awake,
A prowling jackal's hungry cry blown faintly o'er the lake.

She shivered, but she turned to kiss his soft, remembered
face,
Lit by the pallid light he lay, in Youth's abandoned grace.

But as her lips met his she paused, in terror and dismay,
The white moon showed her by her side asleep a Leper lay.

"Ah, Moghra flowers, white Moghra flowers,
All love is blind, they say;
The Moghra flowers, so sweet, so sweet,
Though love be burnt away!"

Youth

I AM not sure if I knew the truth
What his case or crime might be,
I only know that he pleaded Youth,
A beautiful, golden plea!

Youth, with its sunlit, passionate eyes,
Its roseate velvet skin—
A plea to cancel a thousand lies,
Or a thousand nights of sin.

The men who judged him were old and grey,
Their eyes and their senses dim,
He brought the light of a warm Spring day
To the Court-house bare and grim.

Could he plead guilty in a lovelier way?
His judges acquitted him.

*When Love Is Over:
Song of Khan Zada*

ONLY in August my heart was aflame,
Catching the scent of your Wind-stirred hair,
Now, though you spread it to soften my sleep
Through the night, I should hardly care.

Only last August I drank that water
Because it had chanced to cool your hands;
When love is over, how little of love
Even the lover understands!

Kotri, by the River

AT Kotri, by the river, when the evening's sun is low,
The waving palm trees quiver, the golden waters glow,
The shining ripples shiver, descending to the sea;
At Kotri, by the river, she used to wait for me.

So young, she was, and slender, so pale with wistful eyes
As luminous and tender as Kotri's twilight skies.
Her face broke into flowers, red flowers at the mouth,
Her voice,—she sang for hours like bulbuls in the south.

We sat beside the water through burning summer days,
And many things I taught her of Life and all its ways,
Of Love, man's loveliest duty, of Passion's reckless pain,
Of Youth, whose transient beauty comes once, but not
again.

She lay and laughed and listened beside the water's edge.
The glancing river glistened and glinted through the sedge.
Green parrots flew above her and, as the daylight died,
Her young arms drew her lover more closely to her side.

Oh days so warm and golden! oh nights so cool and still!
When Love would not be holden, and Pleasure had his will.

Days, when in after leisure, content to rest we lay,
Nights, when her lips' soft pressure drained all my life away.

And while we sat together, beneath the Babul trees,
The fragrant, sultry weather cooled by the river breeze,
If passion faltered ever, and left the senses free,
We heard the tireless river descending to the sea.

I know not where she wandered, or went in after days,
Or if her youth she squandered in Love's more doubtful
ways.

Perhaps, beside the river, she died, still young and fair;
Perchance the grasses quiver above her slumber there.

At Kotri, by the river, maybe I too shall sleep
The sleep that lasts for ever, too deep for dreams; too deep.
Maybe among the shingle and sand of floods to be
Her dust and mine may mingle and float away to sea.

Ah Kotri, by the river, when evening's sun is low,
Your faint reflections quiver, your golden ripples glow.
You knew, oh Kotri river, that love which could not last.
For me your palms still shiver with passions of the past.

Yasmini

*A*T night, when Passion's ebbing tide
Left bare the Sands of Truth,
Yasmini, resting by my side,
Spoke softly of her youth.

"And one," she said, "was tall and slim,
Two crimson rose leaves made his mouth,
And I was fain to follow him
Down to his village in the South.

"He was to build a hut hard by
The stream where palms were growing,
We were to live, and love, and lie,
And watch the water flowing.

"Ah, dear, delusive, distant shore,
By dreams of futile fancy gilt!
The riverside we never saw,
The palm leaf hut was never built!

"One had a Tope of Mangoe trees,
Where early morning, noon and late,
The Persian wheels, with patient ease,
Brought up their liquid, silver freight.

"And he was fain to rise and reach
That garden sloping to the sea,
Whose groves along the wave-swept beach
Should shelter him and love and me.

"Doubtless, upon that western shore
With ripe fruit falling to the ground,
There dwells the Peace he hungered for,
The lovely Peace we never found.

"Then there came one with eager eyes
And keen sword, ready for the fray.
He missed the storms of Northern skies,
The reckless raid and skirmish gay!

"He rose from dreams of war's alarms,
To make his daggers keen and bright,
Desiring, in my very arms,
The fiercer rapture of the fight!

"He left me soon; too soon, and sought
The stronger, earlier love again.
News reached me from the Cabul Court,
Afterwards nothing; doubtless slain.

"Doubtless his brilliant, haggard eyes,
Long since took leave of life and light,
And those lithe limbs I used to prize
Feasted the jackal and the kite.

"But the most loved! his sixteen years
Shone in his cheeks' transparent red.
My kisses were his first: my tears
Fell on his face when he was dead.

"He died, he died, I speak the truth,
Though light love leave his memory dim,
He was the Lover of my Youth
And all my youth went down with him.

"For passion ebbs and passion flows,
But under every new caress
The riven heart more keenly knows
Its own inviolate faithfulness.

"Our Gods are kind and still deem fit
As in old days, with those to lie,
Whose silent hearths are yet unlit
By the soft light of infancy.

"Therefore, one strange, mysterious night
Alone within the Temple shade,
Recipient of a God's delight
I lay enraptured, unafraid.

"Also to me the boon was given,
But mourning quickly followed mirth,
My son, whose father stooped from Heaven,
Died in the moment of his birth.

“When from the war beyond the seas
The reckless Lancers home returned,
Their spoils were laid across my knees,
About my lips their kisses burned.

“Back from the Comradeship of Death,
Free from the Friendship of the Sword,
With brilliant eyes and famished breath
They came to me for their reward.

“Why do I tell you all these things,
Baring my life to you, unsought?
When Passion folds his wearied wings
Sleep should be follower, never Thought.

“Ay, let us sleep. The window pane
Grows pale against the purple sky.
The dawn is with us once again,
The dawn; which always means good-bye.”

Within her little trellised room, beside the palm-fringed sea,
She, wakeful in the scented gloom, spoke of her youth to me.

The Aloe

*M*Y life was like an Aloe flower, beneath an orient sky,
Your sunshine touched it for an hour; it blossomed but to
die.

Torn up, cast out, on rubbish heaps where red flames work
their will
Each atom of the Aloe keeps the flower-time fragrance still.

The First Lover

*A*s o'er the vessel's side she leant,
She saw the swimmer in the sea
With eager eyes on her intent,
"Come down, come down and swim with me."

So weary was she of her lot,
Tired of the ship's monotony,
She straightway all the world forgot
Save the young swimmer in the sea.

So when the dusky, dying light
Left all the water dark and dim,
She softly, in the friendly night,
Slipped down the vessel's side to him.

Intent and brilliant, brightly dark,
She saw his burning, eager eyes,
And many a phosphorescent spark
About his shoulders fall and rise.

As through the hushed and Eastern night
They swam together, hand in hand,

Or lay and laughed in sheer delight
Full length upon the level sand.

“Ah, soft, delusive, purple night
Whose darkness knew no vexing moon!
Ah, cruel, needless, dawning light
That trembled in the sky too soon!”

"Lost Delight"
After the Hazara War

I LIE alone beneath the Almond blossoms,
Where we two lay together in the spring,
And now, as then, the mountain snows are melting,
This year, as last, the water-courses sing.

That was another spring, and other flowers,
Hung, pink and fragile, on the leafless tree,
The land rejoiced in other running water,
And I rejoiced, because you were with me.

You, with your soft eyes, darkly lashed and shaded,
Your red lips like a living, laughing rose,
Your restless, amber limbs so lithe and slender
Now lost to me. Gone whither no man knows.

You lay beside me singing in the sunshine;
The rough, white fur, unloosened at the neck,
Showed the smooth skin, fair as the Almond blossoms,
On which the sun could find no flaw or fleck.

I lie alone, beneath the Almond flowers,
I hated them to touch you as they fell.
And now, who killed you? worse, ah, worse, who loves you?
(My soul is burning as men burn in Hell.)

How I have sought you in the crowded cities!
I have been mad, they say, for many days.
I know not how I came here, to the valley,
What fate has led me, through what doubtful ways.

Somewhere I see my sword has done good service,
Some one I killed, who, smiling, used your name,
But in what country? Nay, I have forgotten,
All thought is shrivelled in my heart's hot flame.

Where are you now, Delight, and where your beauty.
Your subtle curls, and laughing, changeful face?
Bound, bruised and naked (dear God, grant me patience),
And sold in Cabul in the market-place.

I asked of you of all men. Who could tell me?
Among so many captured, sold, or slain,
What fate was yours? (Ah, dear God, grant me patience,
My heart is burnt, is burnt, with fire and pain.)

Oh, lost Delight! my heart is almost breaking,
My sword is broken and my feet are sore,
The people look at me and say in passing,
"He will not leave the village any more."

For as the evening falls, the fever rises,
 With frantic thoughts careering through the brain,
Wild thoughts of you. (Ah, dear God, grant me patience,
 My soul is hurt beyond all men call pain.)

I lie alone, beneath the Almond blossoms,
 And see the white snow melting on the hills
Till Khorassan is gay with water-courses,
 Glad with the tinkling sound of running rills,

And well I know that when the fragile petals
 Fall softly, ere the first green leaves appear,
(Ah, for these last few days, God, grant me patience,)
 Since Delight is not, I shall not be, here!

Unforgotten

Do you ever think of me? you who died
Ere our Youth's first fervour chilled,
With your soft eyes and your pulses stilled
Lying alone, aside,
Do you ever think of me, left in the light,
From the endless calm of your dawnless night?

I am faithful always: I do not say
That the lips which thrilled to your lips of old
To lesser kisses are always cold;
Had you wished for this in its narrow sense
Our love perhaps had been less intense;
But as we held faithfulness, you and I,
I am faithful always, as you who lie,
Asleep for ever, beneath the grass,
While the days and nights and the seasons pass,—
Pass away.

I keep your memory near my heart,
My brilliant, beautiful guiding Star,
Till long life over, I too depart
To the infinite night where perhaps you are.

Oh, are you anywhere? Loved so well!
I would rather know you alive in Hell
Than think your beauty is nothing now,
With its deep dark eyes and tranquil brow
Where the hair fell softly. Can this be true
That nothing, nowhere, exists of you?
Nothing, nowhere, oh, loved so well

I have *never* forgotten.

Do you still keep
Thoughts of me through your dreamless sleep?

Oh, gone from me! lost in Eternal Night,
Lost Star of light,
Risen splendidly, set so soon,
Through the weariness of life's afternoon
I dream of your memory yet.
My loved and lost, whom I could not save,
My youth went down with you to the grave,
Though other planets and stars may rise,
I dream of your soft and sorrowful eyes
And I cannot forget.

Story of Lilavanti

THEY lay the slender body down
With all its wealth of wetted hair,
Only a daughter of the town,
But very young and slight and fair.

The eyes, whose light one cannot see,
Are sombre doubtless, like the tresses,
The mouth's soft curvings seem to be
A roseate series of caresses.

And where the skin has all but dried
(The air is sultry in the room)
Upon her breast and either side,
It shows a soft and amber bloom.

By women here, who knew her life,
A leper husband, I am told,
Took all this loveliness to wife
When it was barely ten years old.

And when the child in shocked dismay
Fled from the hated husband's care

He caught and tied her, so they say,
Down to his bedside by her hair.

To some low quarter of the town,
Escaped a second time, she flew;
Her beauty brought her great renown
And many lovers here she knew,

When, as the mystic Eastern night
With purple shadow filled the air,
Behind her window framed in light,
She sat with jasmin in her hair.

At last she loved a youth, who chose
To keep this wild flower for his own,
He in his garden set his rose
Where it might bloom for him alone.

Cholera came; her lover died,
Want drove her to the streets again,
And women found her there, who tried
To turn her beauty into gain.

But she who in those garden ways
Had learnt of Love, would now no more
Be bartered in the market place
For silver, as in days before.

That former life she strove to change;
She sold the silver off her arms,
While all the world grew cold and strange
To broken health and fading charms.

Till, finding lovers, but no friend,
Nor any place to rest or hide,
She grew despairing at the end,
Slipped softly down a well and died.

And yet, how short, when all is said,
This little life of love and tears!
Her age, they say, beside her bed,
To-day is only fifteen years.

The Garden by the Bridge

THE Desert sands are heated, parched and dreary,
The tigers rend alive their quivering prey
In the near Jungle; here the kites rise, weary,
Too gorged with living food to fly away.

All night the hungry jackals howl together
Over the carrion in the river bed,
Or seize some small soft thing of fur or feather
Whose dying shrieks on the night air are shed.

I hear from yonder Temple in the distance
Whose roof with obscene carved Gods is piled,
Reiterated with a sad insistence
Sobs of, perhaps, some immolated child.

Strange rites here, where the archway's shade is deeper,
Are consummated in the river bed;
Pariahs steal the rotten railway sleeper
To burn the bodies of their cholera dead.

But yet, their lust, their hunger, cannot shame them,
Goaded by fierce desire, that flays and stings;

Poor beasts, and poorer men. Nay, who shall blame them?
Blame the Inherent Cruelty of Things.

The world is horrible and I am lonely,
Let me rest here where yellow roses bloom
And find forgetfulness, remembering only
Your face beside me in the scented gloom.

Nay, do not shrink! I am not here for passion,
I crave no love, only a little rest,
Although I would my face lay, lover's fashion,
Against the tender coolness of your breast.

I am so weary of the Curse of Living
The endless, aimless torture, tumult, fears.
Surely, if life were any God's free giving,
He, seeing His gift, long since went blind with tears.

Seeing us; our fruitless strife, our futile praying,
Our luckless Present and our bloodstained Past.
Poor players, who make a trick or two in playing,
But know that death *must* win the game at last.

As round the Fowler, red with feathered slaughter,
The little joyous lark, unconscious, sings,—
As the pink Lotus floats on azure water,
Innocent of the mud from whence it springs.

You walk through life, unheeding all the sorrow,
The fear and pain set close around your way,
Meeting with hopeful eyes each gay to-morrow,
Living with joy each hour of glad to-day.

I love to have you thus (nay, dear, lie quiet,
How should these reverent fingers wrong your hair?)
So calmly careless of the rush and riot
That rages round, is seething everywhere.

You do not understand. You think your beauty
Does but inflame my senses to desire,
Till all you hold as loyalty and duty,
Is shrunk and shrivelled in the ardent fire.

You wrong me, wearied out with thought and grieving
As though the whole world's sorrow eat my heart,
I come to gaze upon your face believing
Its beauty is as ointment to the smart.

Lie still and let me in my desolation
Caress the soft loose hair a moment's span.
Since Loveliness is Life's one Consolation,
And love the only Lethe left to man.

Ah, give me here beneath the trees in flower,
Beside the river where the fireflies pass,
One little dusky, all consoling hour
Lost in the shadow of the long grown grass.

Give me, oh you whose arms are soft and slender,
Whose eyes are nothing but one long caress,
Against your heart, so innocent and tender,
A little Love and some Forgetfulness.

Fate Knows No Tears

JUST as the dawn of Love was breaking
 Across the weary world of grey,
Just as my life once more was waking
 As roses waken late in May,
Fate, blindly cruel and havoc-making,
 Stepped in and carried you away.

Memories have I none in keeping
 Of times I held you near my heart,
Of dreams when we were near to weeping
 That dawn should bid us rise and part;
Never, alas, I saw you sleeping
 With soft closed eyes and lips apart,

Breathing my name still through your dreaming.—
 Ah! had you stayed, such things had been!
But Fate, unheeding human scheming,
 Serenely reckless came between—
Fate with her cold eyes hard and gleaming
 Unseared by all the sorrow seen.

Ah! well-beloved, I never told you,
 I did not show in speech or song,

How at the end I longed to fold you
Close in my arms; so fierce and strong
The longing grew to have and hold you,
You, and you only, all life long.

They who know nothing call me fickle,
Keen to pursue and loth to keep.
Ah, could they see these tears that trickle
From eyes erstwhile too proud to weep.
Could see me, prone, beneath the sickle,
While pain and sorrow stand and reap!

Unopened scarce, yet overblown, lie
The hopes that rose-like round me grew,
The lights are low, and more than lonely
This life I lead apart from you.
Come back, come back! I want you only,
And you who loved me never knew.

You loved me, pleaded for compassion
On all the pain I would not share;
And I in weary, halting fashion
Was loth to listen, long to care;
But now, dear God! I faint with passion
For your far eyes and distant hair.

Yes, I am faint with love, and broken
With sleepless nights and empty days;

I want your soft words fiercely spoken,
Your tender looks and wayward ways—
Want that strange smile that gave me token
Of many things that no man says.

Cold was I, weary, slow to waken
Till, startled by your ardent eyes,
I felt the soul within me shaken
And long-forgotten senses rise;
But in that moment you were taken,
And thus we lost our Paradise!

Farewell, we may not now recover
That golden "Then" misspent, passed by,
We shall not meet as loved and lover
Here, or hereafter, you and I.
My time for loving you is over,
Love has no future, but to die.

And thus we part, with no believing
In any chance of future years.
We have no idle self-deceiving,
No half-consoling hopes and fears;
We know the Gods grant no retrieving
A wasted chance. Fate knows no tears.

Verses: Faiz Ulla

JUST in the hush before dawn
A little wistful wind is born.
A little chilly errant breeze,
That thrills the grasses, stirs the trees.
And, as it wanders on its way,
While yet the night is cool and dark,
The first carol of the lark,—
Its plaintive murmurs seem to say
“I wait the sorrows of the day.”

Kashmiri Song

*P*ALE hands I loved beside the Shalimar,
Where are you now? Who lies beneath your spell?
Whom do you lead on Rapture's roadway, far,
Before you agonise them in farewell?

Oh, pale dispensers of my Joys and Pains,
Holding the doors of Heaven and of Hell,
How the hot blood rushed wildly through the veins
Beneath your touch, until you waved farewell.

Pale hands, pink tipped, like Lotus buds that float
On those cool waters where we used to dwell,
I would have rather felt you round my throat,
Crushing out life, than waving me farewell!

Reverie of Ormuz the Persian

SOFTLY the feathery Palm-trees fade in the violet Distance,
Faintly the lingering light touches the edge of the sea,
Sadly the Music of Waves, drifts, faint as an Anthem's in-
sistence,
Heard in the aisles of a dream, over the sandhills, to me.

Now that the Lights are reversed, and the Singing changed
into sighing,
Now that the wings of our fierce, fugitive passion are
furled,
Take I unto myself, all alone in the light that is dying,
Much of the sorrow that lies hid at the Heart of the World.

Sad am I, sad for your loss: for failing the charm of your
presence,
Even the sunshine has paled, leaving the Zenith less blue.
Even the ocean lessens the light of its green opalescence,
Since, to my sorrow I loved, loved and grew weary of, you.

Why was our passion so fleeting, why had the flush of your
beauty
Only so slender a spell, only so futile a power?

Yet, even thus ever is life, save when long custom or duty
Moulds into sober fruit Love's fragile and fugitive flower.

Fain would my soul have been faithful; never an alien
pleasure
Lured me away from the light lit in your luminous eyes,
But we have altered the World as pitiful man has leisure
To criticise, balance, take counsel, assuredly lies.

All through the centuries Man has gathered his flower, and
fenced it,
—Infinite strife to attain; infinite struggle to keep,—
Holding his treasure awhile, all Fate and all forces against it,
Knowing it his no more, if ever his vigilance sleep.

But we have altered the World as pitiful man has grown
stronger,
So that the things we love are as easily kept as won,
Therefore the ancient fight can engage and detain us no
longer,
And all too swiftly, alas, passion is over and done.

Far too speedily now we can gather the coveted treasure,
Enjoy it awhile, be satiated, begin to tire;
And what shall be done henceforth with the profitless after-
leisure,
Who has the breath to kindle the ash of a faded fire?

Ah, if it only had lasted! After my ardent endeavour
Came the delirious Joy, flooding my life like a sea,

Days of delight that are burnt on the brain for ever and
ever,
Days and nights when you loved, before you grew weary
of me.

Softly the sunset decreases dim in the violet Distance,
Even as Love's own fervour has faded away from me,
Leaving the weariness, the monotonous Weight of Exist-
ence,—
All the farewells in the world weep in the sound of the sea.

Adoration

WHO does not feel desire unending
To solace through his daily strife,
With some mysterious Mental Blending.
The hungry loneliness of life?

Until, by sudden passion shaken,
As terriers shake a rat at play,
He finds, all blindly, he has taken
The old, Hereditary way.

Yet, in the moment of communion,
The very heart of passion's fire,
His spirit spurns the mortal union,
"Not this, not this, the Soul's desire!"

.

Oh You, by whom my life is riven,
And reft away from my control,
Take back the hours of passion given!
Love me one moment from your soul.

Although I once, in ardent fashion,
Implored you long to give me this;

(In hopes to stem, or stifle, passion)
Your hair to touch, your lips to kiss.

Now that your gracious self has granted
The loveliness you hold as naught,
I find, alas! not that I wanted—
Possession has not stifled Thought.

Desire its aim has only shifted,—
Built hopes upon another plan,
And I in love for you have drifted
Beyond all passion known to man.

Beyond all dreams of soft caresses
The solacing of any kiss,—
Beyond the fragrance of your tresses
(Once I had sold my soul for this!)

But now I crave no mortal union
(Thanks for that sweetness in the past);
I need some subtle, strange communion,
Some sense that *I* join *you* at last.

Long past the pulse and pain of passion,
Long left the limits of all love,—
I crave some nearer, fuller fashion,
Some unknown way, beyond, above,—

Some infinitely inner fusion,
As Wave with Water; Flame with Fire,—
Let me dream once the dear delusion
That I am You, oh, Heart's Desire!

Your kindness lent to my caresses
That beauty you so lightly prize,—
The midnight of your sable tresses,
The twilight of your shadowed eyes.

Ah, for that gift all thanks are given!
Yet, oh, adored, beyond control,
Count all the passionate past forgiven
And love me once, once, from your soul.

Song of Zahir-u-Din

THE tropic day's redundant charms
Cool twilight soothes away,
The sun slips down behind the palms
And leaves the landscape grey.
I want to take you in my arms
And kiss your lips away!

I wake with sunshine in my eyes
And find the morning blue,
A night of dreams behind me lies
And all were dreams of you!
Ah, how I wish the while I rise,
That what I dream were true.

The weary day's laborious pace,
I hasten and beguile
By fancies, which I backwards trace
To things I loved erstwhile;
The weary sweetness of your face,
Your faint, illusive smile.

The silken softness of your hair
Where faint bronze shadows are,

Your strangely slight and youthful air,
No passions seem to mar,—
Oh, why, since Fate has made you fair,
Must Fortune keep you far?

Thus spent, the day so long and bright
Less hot and brilliant seems,
Till in a final flare of light
The sun withdraws his beams.
Then, in the coolness of the night,
I meet you in my dreams!

The Regret of the Ranee in the Hall of Peacocks

THIS man has taken my husband's life
And laid my Brethren low,
No sister indeed, were I, no wife,
To pardon and let him go.

Yet why does he look so young and slim
As he weak and wounded lies?
How hard for me to be harsh to him
With his soft, appealing eyes.

His hair is ruffled upon the stone
And the slender wrists are bound,
So young! and yet he has overthrown
His scores on the battle ground.

Would I were only a slave to-day,
To whom it were right and meet
To wash the stains of the War away,
The dust from the weary feet.

Were I but one of my serving girls
To solace his pain to rest!
Shake out the sand from the soft loose curls,
And hold him against my breast!

Have we such beauty around our Throne?
Such lithe and delicate strength?
Would God that I were the senseless stone
To support his slender length!

I hate those wounds that trouble my sight,
Unknown! how I wish you lay,
Alone in my silken tent to-night
While I charmed the pain away.

I would lay you down on the Royal bed,
I would bathe your wounds with wine,
And setting your feet against my head
Dream you were lover of mine.

My Crown is heavy upon my hair,
The jewels weigh on my breast,
All I would leave, with delight, to share
Your pale and passionate rest!

But hands grow restless about their swords,
Lips murmur below their breath,
"The Queen is silent too long!" "My Lords.
—Take him away to death!"

The Window Overlooking the Harbour

SAD is the Evening: all the level sand
Lies left and lonely, while the restless sea,
Tired of the green caresses of the land,
Withdraws into its own infinity.

But still more sad this white and chilly Dawn
Filling the vacant spaces of the sky,
While little winds blow here and there forlorn
And all the stars, weary of shining, die.

And more than desolate, to wake, to rise,
Leaving the couch, where softly sleeping still,
What through the past night made my heaven, lies;
And looking out across the window sill

See, from the upper window's vantage ground,
Mankind slip into harness once again,
And wearily resume his daily round
Of love and labour, toil and strife and pain.

How the sad thoughts slip back across the night:
The whole thing seems so aimless and so vain.

What use the raptures, passion and delight,
Burnt out; as though they could not wake again.

The worn-out nerves and weary brain repeat
The question: whither all these passions tend;—
This curious thirst, so painful and so sweet,
So fierce, so very short-lived, to what end?

Even, if seeking for ourselves, the Race,
The only immortality we know,—
Even if from the flower of our embrace
Some spark should kindle, or some fruit should grow,

What were the use? the gain, to us or it,
That we should cause another You or Me,—
Another life, from our light passion lit,
To suffer like ourselves awhile and die.

What aim, what end indeed? Our being runs
In a closed circle. All we know or see
Tends to assure us that a thousand Suns,
Teeming perchance with life, have ceased to be.

Ah, the grey Dawn seems more than desolate,
And the past night of passion worse than waste,
Love but a useless flower, that soon or late,
Turns to a fruit with bitter aftertaste.

Youth, even Youth, seems futile and forlorn
While the new day grows slowly white above.
Pale and reproachful comes the chilly Dawn
After the fervour of a night of love.

Sea Song

AGAINST the planks of the cabin side,
 (So slight a thing between them and me,)
The great waves thundered and throbbed and sighed,
 The great green waves of the Indian sea!

Your face was white as the foam is white,
 Your hair was curled as the waves are curled,
I would we had steamed and reached that night
 The sea's last edge, the end of the world.

The wind blew in through the open port,
 So freshly joyous and salt and free,
Your hair it lifted, your lips it sought,
 And then swept back to the open sea.

The engines throbbed with their constant beat;
 Your heart was nearer, and all I heard;
Your lips were salt, but I found them sweet,
 While, acquiescent, you spoke no word.

So straight you lay in your narrow berth,
 Rocked by the waves; and you seemed to be

Essence of all that is sweet on earth,
Of all that is sad and strange at sea.

And you were white as the foam is white,
Your hair was curled as the waves are curled
Ah! had we but sailed and reached that night,
The sea's last edge, the end of the world!

To the Hills!

'T is eight miles out and eight miles in,
Just at the break of morn.
'T is ice without and flame within,
To gain a kiss at dawn!

Far, where the Lilac Hills arise
Soft from the misty plain,
A lone enchanted hollow lies
Where I at last drew rein.

Midwinter grips this lonely land,
This stony, treeless waste,
Where East, due East, across the sand,
We fly in fevered haste.

Pull up! the East will soon be red,
The wild duck westward fly,
And make above my anxious head,
Triangles in the sky.

Like wind we go; we both are still
So young; all thanks to Fate!

(It cuts like knives, this air so chill,)
Dear God! if I am late!

Behind us, wrapped in mist and sleep
The Ruined City lies,
(Although we race, we seem to creep!)
While lighter grow the skies.

Eight miles out only, eight miles in,
Good going all the way;
But more and more the clouds begin
To redden into day.

And every snow-tipped peak grows pink,
An iridescent gem!
My heart beats quick, with joy, to think
How I am nearing them!

As mile on mile behind us falls,
Till, oh, delight! I see
My Heart's Desire, who softly calls
Across the gloom to me.

The utter joy of that First Love
No later love has given,
When, while the skies grew light above,
We entered into Heaven.

His Rubies: Told by Valgovind

*A*LONG the hot and endless road,
Calm and erect, with haggard eyes,
The prisoner bore his fetters' load
Beneath the scorching, azure skies.

Serene and tall, with brows unbent,
Without a hope, without a friend,
He, under escort, onward went,
With death to meet him at the end.

The Poppy fields were pink and gay
On either side, and in the heat
Their drowsy scent exhaled all day
A dream-like fragrance almost sweet.

And when the cool of evening fell
And tender colours touched the sky,
He still felt youth within him dwell
And half forgot he had to die.

Sometimes at night, the Camp-fires lit
And casting fitful light around,

His guard would, friend-like, let him sit
And talk awhile with them, unbound.

Thus they, the night before the last,
Were resting, when a group of girls
Across the small encampment passed,
With laughing lips and scented curls.

Then in the Prisoner's weary eyes
A sudden light lit up once more,
The women saw him with surprise,
And pity for the chains he bore.

For little women reck of Crime
If young and fair the criminal be
Here in this tropic, amorous clime
Where love is still untamed and free.

And one there was, she walked less fast,
Behind the rest, perhaps beguiled
By his lithe form, who, as she passed,
Waited a little while, and smiled.

The guard, in kindly Eastern fashion,
Smiled to themselves, and let her stay.
So tolerant of human passion,
"To love he has but one more day."

Yet when (the soft and scented gloom
Scarce lighted by the dying fire)
His arms caressed her youth and bloom,
With him it was not all desire.

"For me," he whispered, as he lay,
"But little life remains to live.
One thing I crave to take away:
You have the gift; but will you give?"

"If I could know some child of mine
Would live his life, and see the sun
Across these fields of poppies shine,
What should I care that mine is done?"

"To die would not be dying quite,
Leaving a little life behind,
You, were you kind to me to-night,
Could grant me this; but—are you kind?"

"See, I have something here for you
For you and It, if It there be."
Soft in the gloom her glances grew,
With gentle tears he could not see.

He took the chain from off his neck,
Hid in the silver chain there lay

'Three rubies, without flaw or fleck.
She answered softly, "I will stay."

He drew her close; the moonless skies
Shed little light; the fire was dead.
Soft pity filled her youthful eyes,
And many tender things she said.

Throughout the hot and silent night
All that he asked of her she gave.
And, left alone ere morning light,
He went serenely to the grave,

Happy; for even when the rope
Confined his neck, his thoughts were free,
And centered round his Secret Hope,
The little life that was to be.

When Poppies bloomed again, she bore
His child who gaily laughed and crowed,
While round his tiny neck he wore
The rubies given on the road.

For his small sake she wished to wait,
But vainly to forget she tried,
And grieving for the Prisoner's fate,
She broke her gentle heart and died.

The Garden of Kama: Kama the Indian Eros

*T*HE daylight is dying,
The Flying fox flying,
 Amber and amethyst burn in the sky.
See, the sun throws a late,
Lingering, roseate
 Kiss to the landscape to bid it good-bye.

The time of our Trysting!
Oh, come, unresisting,
 Lovely, expectant, on tentative feet.
Shadow shall cover us,
Roses bend over us,
 Making a bride chamber, sacred and sweet.

We know not life's reason,
The length of its season,
 Know not if they know, the great Ones above.
We none of us sought it,
And few could support it,
 Were it not gilt with the glamour of love.

But much is forgiven
To Gods who have given,
 If but for an hour, the Rapture of Youth.
You do not yet know it,
But Kama shall show it,
 Changing your dreams to his Exquisite Truth.

The Fireflies shall light you,
And naught shall affright you,
 Nothing shall trouble the Flight of the Hours.
Come, for I wait for you,
Night is too late for you,
 Come, while the twilight is closing the flowers.

Every breeze still is,
And, scented with lilies,
 Cooled by the twilight, refreshed by the dew,
The garden lies breathless,
Where Kama, the Deathless,
 In the hushed starlight, is waiting for you.

No Rival Like the Past

*A*s those who eat a Luscious Fruit, sunbaked,
Full of sweet juice, with zest, until they find
It finished, and their appetite unslaked,
And so return and eat the pared-off rind;—

We, who in Youth, set white and careless teeth
In the Ripe Fruits of Pleasure while they last,
Later, creep back to gnaw the cast-off sheath,
And find there is no Rival like the Past.

There Is No Breeze to Cool the Heat of Love

THE listless Palm-trees catch the breeze above
The pile-built huts that edge the salt Lagoon,
There is no Breeze to cool the heat of love,
No wind from land or sea, at night or noon.

Perfumed and robed I wait, my Lord, for you,
And my heart waits alert, with strained delight,
My flowers are loath to close, as though they knew
That you will come to me before the night.

In the Verandah all the lights are lit,
And softly veiled in rose to please your eyes,
Between the pillars flying foxes flit,
Their wings transparent on the lilac skies.

Come soon, my Lord, come soon, I almost fear
My heart may fail me in this keen suspense,
Break with delight, at last, to know you near.
Pleasure is one with Pain, if too intense.

I envy these: the steps that you will tread,
The jasmin that will touch you by its leaves,
When, in your slender height, you stoop your head
At the low door beneath the palm-thatched eaves.

For though you utterly belong to me,
And love has done his utmost 'twixt us twain,
Your slightest, careless touch yet seems to be
That keen delight so much akin to pain.

The night breeze blows across the still Lagoon,
And stirs the Palm-trees till they wave above
Our pile-built huts; oh, come, my Lord, come soon,
There is no Breeze to cool the heat of love.

Every time you give yourself to me,
The gift seems greater, and yourself more fair,
This slight-built, palm-thatched hut has come to be
A temple, since, my Lord, you visit there.

And as the water, gurgling softly, goes
Among the piles beneath the slender floor,
I hear it murmur, as it seaward flows,
Of the great Wonder seen upon the shore.

The Miracle, that you should come to me,
Whom the whole world, seeing, can but desire,
It is as though some White Star stooped to be
The messmate of our little cooking fire.

Leaving the Glory of his Purple Skies,
And the White Friendship of the Crescent Moon,
And yet;—I look into your brilliant eyes,
And find content; oh, come, my Lord, some soon.

Perfumed and robed I wait for you, I wait,
The flowers that please you wreathed about my hair,
And this poor face set forth in jewelled state,
So more than proud since you have found it fair.

My lute is ready, and the fragrant drink
Your lips may honour, how it will rejoice
Losing its life in yours! The lute I think
But wastes the time when I might hear your voice.

But you desired it, therefore I obey.
Your slightest, as your utmost, wish or will,
Whether it please you to caress or slay,
It would please me to give obedience still.

I would delight to die beneath your kiss;
I envy that young maiden who was slain,
So her warm blood, flowing beneath the kiss,
Might ease the wounded Sultan of his pain—

If she loved him as I love you, my Lord.
There is no pleasure on the earth so sweet
As is the pain endured for one adored;
If I lay crushed beneath your slender feet

I should be happy! Ah, come soon, come soon,
See how the stars grow large and white above,
The land breeze blows across the salt Lagoon,
There is no Breeze to cool the heat of love.

Malaria

HE lurks among the reeds, beside the marsh,
Red oleanders twisted in His hair,
His eyes are haggard and His lips are harsh,
Upon His breast the bones show gaunt and bare.

The green and stagnant waters lick His feet,
And from their filmy, iridescent scum
Clouds of mosquitoes, gauzy in the heat,
Rise with His gifts: Death and Delirium.

His messengers: They bear the deadly taint
On spangled wings aloft and far away,
Making thin music, strident and yet faint,
From golden eve to silver break of day.

The baffled sleeper hears th' incessant whine
Through his tormented dreams, and finds no rest.
The thirsty insects use his blood for wine,
Probe his blue veins and pasture on his breast.

While far away He in the marshes lies,
Staining the stagnant water with His breath,

An endless hunger burning in His eyes,
A famine unassuaged, whose food is Death.

He hides among the ghostly mists that float
Over the water, weird and white and chill,
And peasants, passing in their laden boat,
Shiver and feel a sense of coming ill.

A thousand burn and die; He takes no heed,
Their bones, unburied, strewn upon the plain,
Only increase the frenzy of His greed
To add more victims to th' already slain.

He loves the haggard frame, the shattered mind,
Gloats with delight upon the glazing eye,
Yet, in one thing, His cruelty is kind,
He sends them lovely dreams before they die;

Dreams that bestow on them their heart's desire,
Visions that find them mad, and leave them blest,
To sink, forgetful of the fever's fire,
Softly, as in a lover's arms, to rest.

Fancy

FAR in the Further East the skilful craftsman
Fashioned this fancy for the West's delight.
This rose and azure Dragon, crouching softly
Upon the satin skin, close-grained and white.

And you lay silent, while his slender needles
Pricked the intricate pattern on your arm,
Combining deftly Cruelty and Beauty,
That subtle union, whose child is charm.

Charm irresistible: the lovely something
We follow in our dreams, but may not reach.
The unattainable Divine Enchantment,
Hinted in music, never heard in speech.

This from the blue design exhales towards me,
As incense rises from the Homes of Prayer,
While the unfettered eyes, allured and rested,
Urge the forbidden lips to stoop and share;

Share in the sweetness of the rose and azure
Traced in the Dragon's form upon the white
Curve of the arm. Ah, curb thyself, my fancy,
Where wouldst thou drift in this enchanted flight?

Feroza

THE evening sky was as green as Jade,
As Emerald turf by Lotus lake,
Behind the Kafilā far she strayed,
(The Pearls are lost if the Necklace break!)

A lingering freshness touched the air
From palm-trees, clustered around a Spring,
The great, grim Desert lay vast and bare,
But Youth is ever a careless thing.

The Raiders threw her upon the sand,
Men of the Wilderness know no laws,
They tore the Amethysts off her hand,
And rent the folds of her veiling gauze.

They struck the lips that they might have kissed
Pitiless they to her pain and fear,
And wrenched the gold from her broken wrist,
No use to cry; there were none to hear.

Her scarlet mouth and her onyx eyes,
Her braided hair in its silken sheen,

Were surely meet for a Lover's prize,
But Fate dissented, and stepped between.

Across the Zenith the vultures fly,
Cruel of beak and heavy of wing.
Thus it was written that she should die.
Inshallah! Death is a transient thing.

This Month the Almonds Bloom at Kandahar

I HATE this City, seated on the Plain,
The clang and clamour of the hot Bazar,
Knowing, amid the pauses of my pain,
This month the Almonds bloom in Kandahar.

The Almond-trees, that sheltered my Delight,
Screening my happiness as evening fell.
It was well worth—that most Enchanted Night—
This life in torment, and the next in Hell!

People are kind to me; one More than Kind,
Her lashes lie like fans upon her cheek,
But kindness is a burden on my mind,
And it is weariness to hear her speak.

For though that Kaffir's bullet holds me here,
My thoughts are ever free, and wander far,
To where the Lilac Hills rise, soft and clear,
Beyond the Almond Groves of Kandahar.

He followed me to Sibi, to the Fair,
The Horse-fair, where he shot me weeks ago,
But since they fettered him I have no care
That my returning steps to health are slow.

They will not loose him till they know my fate,
And I rest here till I am strong to slay,
Meantime, my Heart's Delight may safely wait
Among the Almond blossoms, sweet as they.

That cursed Kaffir! Well, he won by day,
But I won, what I so desired, by night,
My arms held what his lack till Judgment Day!
Also, the game is not yet over—quite!

Wait, Amir Ali, wait till I come forth
To kill, before the Almond-trees are green,
To raze thy very Memory from the North,
So that thou art not, and thou hast not been!

Aha! Friend Amir Ali! it is Duty
To rid the World from Shiah dogs like thee,
They are but ill-placed moles on Islam's beauty,
Such as the Faithful cannot calmly see!

Also my bullet hurts me not a little,
Thy Shiah blood might serve to salve the ill.
Maybe some Afghan Promises are brittle;
Never a Promise to oneself, to kill!

Now I grow stronger, I have days of leisure
To shape my coming Vengeance as I lie,
And, undisturbed by call of War or Pleasure,
Can dream of many ways a man may die.

I shall not torture thee, thy friends might rally,
Some Fate assist thee and prove false to me;
Oh! shouldst thou now escape me, Amir Ali,
This would torment me through Eternity!

Aye, Shuffa-Jan, I will be quiet indeed,
Give here the Hakim's powder if thou wilt,
And thou mayst sit, for I perceive thy need,
And rest thy soft-haired head upon my quilt.

Thy gentle love will not disturb a mind
That loves and hates beneath a fiercer Star.
Also, thou know'st, my Heart is left behind,
Among the Almond-trees of Kandahar!

The Singer

THE singer only sang the Joy of Life,
For all too well, alas! the singer knew
How hard the daily toil, how keen the strife,
How salt the falling tear; the joys how few.

He who thinks hard soon finds it hard to live,
Learning the Secret Bitterness of Things:
So, leaving thought, the singer strove to give
A level lightness to his lyric strings.

He only sang of Love; its joy and pain,
But each man in his early season loves;
Each finds the old, lost Paradise again,
Unfolding leaves, and roses, nesting doves.

And though that sunlit time flies all too fleetly,
Delightful Days that dance away too soon!
Its early morning freshness lingers sweetly
Throughout life's grey and tedious afternoon.

And he, whose dreams enshrine her tender eyes,
And she, whose senses wait his waking hand,

Impatient youth, that tired but sleepless lies,
Will read perhaps, and reading, understand.

Oh, roseate lips he would have loved to kiss,
Oh, eager lovers that he never knew!
What should you know of him, or words of his?—
But all the songs he sang were sung for you!

To Aziz: Song of Mahomed Akram

YOUR beauty puts a barb into my soul,
Strive as I will it never lets me go.
My love has passed the frontiers of control,
You are so fair and I desire you so.

Others may come and go, they are to me
But changing mirage, transient, untrue,
My faithlessness is but fidelity
Since I am never faithful, but to you.

You are not kind to me, but many are
And all their kindness does not make them dear;
It may be you deceive me when afar
Even as always you torment me near.

Yet is your beauty so divine a thing,
So irreplaceable, so haunting sweet
Against all reason, I am fain to fling
My life, my youth, myself, beneath your feet.

Oh, Life, I Have Taken You
for My Lover!

(To Arthus E. J. Legge, who suggested this idea)

OH, Life, I have taken you for my Lover,
I rent your veils and I found you fair;
If a fault or failing my eyes discover,
I will not see it; it is not there!

I know, *if I knew*, I should hold you dearer,
Should understand, *if I understood*,
For I worship more, as you draw me nearer,
Your reckless Evil, your perfect Good.

In the Jungle gloom, we have watched and waited,
For stealthy Panthers, that prowled by night,
At the end of some weary march, belated,
We heard strange tales by the camp-fire light.

We have lain on the starlit sands, untented,
While low-hung planets rose white and fair,
And in moonlit gardens, silver and scented,
Oh, Life, my Lover, how sweet you were!

Forbidden and barbarous rites were shown us,
In rock-hewn Temples and jungle caves,
And the smoke-wreathed home of the dead has
known us,—
The burning-ghat by the Ganges' waves.

Ah, the long, lone ride through the starlit hours,
The long, lone watch on the starlit sea,
And the flame and flush of the morning flowers
When Life, my Lover, was kind to me!

Betimes we were out on the Sea, together;
The vessel raced down the great green slope
Of mountainous waves, in desperate weather;
The hearts of men were adrift from hope.

As over the deck, in exultant fashion,
The violent water crashed and fell,
I knew, through the joy of your reckless passion,
Agonized fear of the last farewell.

But I follow you always, unresisting,
To lowest depth; to uttermost brink,
From a thirst like mine there is no desisting
Though given poison for wine to drink.

You may do your utmost, you will not shake me,
Your faith may falter; my faith is true.

Oh, Life, you may shatter and rend and break me,
All Pain is Pleasure, that springs from you!

In the height and heat of your wildest passion,
You had your uttermost will of me,
And when have I asked for the least compassion?
A lover loved is a lover free!

Though, with never a word of farewell spoken
In lonely wilds of some Desert place,
You have flung me from you, adrift and broken
To wait the child of your last embrace.

And never my faith nor my fervour faltered,
Until you turned to my lips again,
When, my eager longing for you unaltered
Your first kiss cancelled my months of pain.

Ah, Life, you may torture my soul, betray me,
The right is yours, as Lover and Lord.
And when in the climax of all, you slay me,
My lips in dying will seek your sword.

Sleep

(The Moorish Slave, at Fidala, Morocco)

THERE is something so beseeching in the attitude of sleep,
A pathetic resignation, most appealing to the heart.
There must surely be some secret that the eyes in slumber
keep,
Which the lips, on their awakening, could not, if they
would impart.

See yon Slave from Sus, recumbent, with his ebon arms out-
spread
On the marigold he crushes to a sheet of golden flowers,
How the mystery of dreaming lends a halo to his head,
And exalts him to a level never reached in waking hours.

In the form that lies impassive, while the sea-wind comes
and goes
And uplifts his rags in pity, on its cool refreshing breath,
There is something so prophetic of the Last and Great Re-
pose:
Sleep has borrowed, in its quietude, the Dignity of Death.

Though his parted lips are wordless, though he breathes no
uttered prayer

Yet his silence seems imploring, "Let me deem the noon-
day night,
For my dreams are velvet-breasted, and they shelter me
from care,
I entreat thee not to wake me to the sorrows of the light."

Ah, sleep on, in peace, my brother, to awaken when thou
wilt,
From the dreams that treat thee kindly, and the rest that
sets thee free.
With the wild fig for thy canopy, the marigolds thy quilt,
And, to serve thee for a lullaby, the thunder of the Sea.

Song of the Enfifa River

(In memory of Abdullah, drowned at sixteen, on
the road to Rabat, Morocco)

*A*T day-break, when the tide was low
He came to bathe his slender feet,
And laughing, sported to and fro,
Across my waters cool and sweet.

Obedient to his Faith's decree
His sable hair was shorn away,
One curl was left, that floating free,
I longed to deck with silver spray.

His eyes were wide and full of light,
Young eyes, where dreams and fancies glow.
There was no star in Heaven so bright,
And I reflect the stars, and know.

He gave himself to my embrace,
Ah, Youth, confiding and unwise!
My kisses clustered on his face;
How should I render up my prize?

Yet he withdrew; my waves were weak.
He loitered on my banks awhile,
Shook my caresses from his cheek,
And left me with a careless smile.

I let him leave; my tides were low.
But, seeking succour of the Sea
At noon I felt the breakers flow
Across the bar, and join with me.

I waited in the heat; at length
Again he came to bathe alone,
Then, in the fulness of my strength,
I caught and held him for my own!

His strong young arms apart he flung,
His red lips cried, I had no care.
In eddies round his limbs I clung,
And rippled in and out his hair.

I bore him downwards to the Sea,
The white surf met us on the sand,
His beauty was made one with me
Who saw and loved it on the land.

I laid him down upon the bar,
Played with his hair, and kissed his eyes.
How cold those mortal lovers are!
He sleeps and makes me no replies.

My tides run low; he will not wake,
His hands drift, like an empty shell.
I stole him for his beauty's sake,
Alas, Enfifa did not well!

His young lips show no stir of breath.
Ah,—I begin to understand,
And I remember:—this is Death!
The haunting terror of the land.

The River of Pearls at Fez: *Translation*

ONE evening we sat together
By the River of Pearls at Fez,
Stringing verses and sometimes singing.
My gaze followed the beautiful boy
Who, with a swift and delicate movement,
Flung the wine-cup over his shoulder;
The ruby drops glittered and fell
Bright in the dying sunshine.
The River of Pearls shone like a sword in the grass,
Not disdaining
The work of turning the waterwheel,
And the sun, reluctant, lingered about the tree-tops
In a golden mist of farewell.

Many the tears that have fallen since,
Many the nights that have passed,
But I remembered
The River of Pearls at Fez
And Seomar whom I loved.

The Hospital on the Shore

THE youthful swimmers come up on the beach,
Naked and fresh from the kiss of the sea,
I hear the sound of their light-hearted speech;
As it is with them, it was once with me!
Oh, Death, grant me pity: just one day more,
And let me go down again to the shore.

I could have died in the rush of the air,
Mid crashing water and petulant spray,
The surf in my teeth, the wind in my hair,
Rejoicing, exultant, even as they.
But to meet Death here, . . . in this walled-in cage,
I am dumb with terror and blind with rage.

Have pity! Reprieve me! just one more ride,
White sand beneath us, white planets above,
One last long sail with the ebb of the tide,
One lilac evening of delicate love.
One lingering look at those eyes of his.
To remember through the Eternities.

Among the Sandhills

LIE still, Beloved, I also see the day
Shoot his white arrows through the trembling sky,
But what is dawn to us, who cast away
All sense of time that mars our ecstasy?

The scented orange bushes check the breeze,
Granting in tribute many waxen stars,
And aromatic Eucalyptus trees
Defy the sun with grey-green scimitars.

Since fate has given us this garden love,
And Time and Space, for once, have acquiesced,
Ah, take no heed of paling skies above,
Let us deem night is with us yet, and rest.

Let us lie still and drift away in dreams,
Back to the jewelled kingdom of the night,
Whose golden stars with dimly radiant gleams
Lit up your loveliness for my delight.

Once we are risen all the cares of day
Will seize and bind us to their wanton will.
Why should we own that night has passed away?
Oh, as you value love, lie still, lie still!

The Cactus

*T*HE scarlet flower, with never a sister leaf,
Stemless, springs from the edge of the Cactus-thorn:
Thus from the ragged wounds of desperate grief
A beautiful Thought, perfect and pure, is born.

Lalla Radha and the Churel

His sixteen years had left him very fair,
Tinted his cheeks with soft and delicate bloom,
Added new lustre to his clustered hair,
And filled his amber eyes with tender gloom.

He sought some unknown thing, he knew not what,
His scarce-seen bride, a child, was far away,
Desiring love, as yet he knew it not,
Sleepless by night he grew, forlorn by day.

PRIEST

"Ah, go not near the Peepul trees,
That shiver in the evening breeze,
A young Churel might hide in these!

"And should she see thee, and desire,
Then will she burn thee in soft fire,
Till in her arms thou shalt expire!"

LALLA RADHA

"But who and what is this Churel,
Who loves in Peepul trees to dwell,

The Peepul, where the Koel sings
In frenzied songs, of amorous things?"

PRIEST

"When, with her child unborn, a woman dies,
Her spirit takes the form of a Churel,
A maiden's form, with soft, alluring eyes,
Where promises of future rapture dwell.

Yet is her loveliness, though passing sweet,
Marred by the backward turning of her feet.

"She sits in branches of the Peepul trees,
Until beneath, a passing youth she sees.
Should she desire him, swift, she will alight,
Entreating softly 'Stay with me to-night!'

No safety then for him; unless he flies,
Soon, in the furnace of her love, he dies!"

LALLA RADHA

"But if indeed these things are so,
Yet what am I, that she should care,
To watch me as I pass below,
Or notice me and find me fair?"

PRIEST

"Yours are the happiest gifts that the Gods have given,
Who have never been over ready with gifts to part.

Youth, the divine reminiscence of some lost Heaven,
Beauty, the dream of the eyes, the desire of the heart.

"Beauty, that women adore and secretly pray for,
To find, to possess, to bequeath to the world again,
The loveliest stake that Life allows them to play for,
At the risk of death; with certain foreknowledge of pain."

DANCING GIRL (*singing in the distance*)

"What will you do with your seventeenth year,
You with the eyes of a dove?
Give it to Love, he will hold you lightly,
Betray you and wound you more than slightly,
But lead you into Paradise nightly,
Give it to Love!!"

He heard and waited awhile, but the days flew by,
And brought a more brilliant sun to the azure sky.

The scent of the flowers grew stronger, grew keen as pain,
And Youth's sweet ferment rose from his heart to his brain

Until, when the west was red, and the evening breeze
Broke fresh on his lips, he went to the Peepul trees.

SONG OF THE CHUREL

"Ah, come to me, I want you so!
Why will you make me wait?
The golden sunsets burn and glow,

The twilight moments come and go,
I watch you wander to and fro,
 Why do you hesitate?

“So very brief Youth’s season is,
 Ah, wherefore waste a single night?
Put up your lips for mine to kiss,
 Take the first promise of delight.

“Upon Life’s pale and tragic face,
 Youth passes like a blush.
It blooms, an evanescent grace,
Alas, for such a little space,
And fading, hardly leaves a trace,
 Of all its radiant flush.

“We cannot force one night to last,
 Or stay a single star at will,
And though the Pulse of Youth is fast,
 The Wings of Time are swifter still.

“So much I want your silken hair,
 Your youth, intact and free,
A thousand nights, serenely fair,
With scented silence everywhere,
Consenting stars and pliant air,
 Would pass too soon for me.

“Too soon the rising flood of morn
 Our isle of night would overflow,

And force upon our eyes forlorn
Its lovely but unwanted glow.

"The magic Garden of Delight
Is ours; I hold the key.

Take up Love's sceptre, yours by right,
And learn his mystery and might,
Ah, come and reign with me to-night,
In silent ecstasy!

"Come, while the silver stars above
Rain down their light serene and still,
And if you cannot come for love,
Ah, come on any terms you will!"

.

How should the youth resist, deny,
Or turn his lips from hers away?
Nightly, beneath th' unheeding sky,
The fierce Churel caressed her prey.

Nightly, the flickering Peepul trees
Echoed his soft and broken sighs,
While the faint eddies of the breeze
In pity fanned his sleepless eyes.

Frailer he grew, more wan and pale,
Possession only fed Desire,
Like wax he felt his forces fail,
Consumed in her insistent fire.

Till lost in dreams, his fainting breath
Shed on her lips in one last sigh,
He neither knew nor noticed death.
This is the loveliest way to die!

Beneath the Peepuls dead he lay,
Pale on his face the starlight fell,
In ecstasy he passed away.
Such is the love of the Churel.

Opium: Li's Riverside Hut at Taku

THE room is bare, the paper windows shiver,
Beneath the ill-hung door, the sleet blows free,
Yet here, Delight flows forth, a gentle river,
To saturate my soul with ecstasy!

I lie upon the heated *Kang*, quiescent,
Lulled by the warmth of lighted straw below,
While Li, the golden-tinted adolescent,
Blue-clad and silent, passes to and fro.

Li, with his well-cut lips and supple fingers,
His crudely lidded eyes, that seem to gaze
Back through ten thousand years of thought, where lingers
Some misty splendour of the old, old days.

Free from the plait, his loosened sable tresses
In silken waves, below the knee, descend.
Bringing the opium pipe, he deftly presses
The viscous drug upon the needle's end.

Lights it, inserts it in the pipe beside me,
Then through my lips the magic vapour streams,

And Life and Love, that seldom satisfied me,
Meet me with lovely faces in my dreams.

Life at his brightest, flushed and crowned with flowers,
Brings gifts no mortal, waking, e'er possessed,
Exquisite Chances, and Enchanted Hours,
While Love,—Love brings me you, to share my rest!

In the Water Palace

THE gracious rain caressed the fields
To bountiful increase,
Profusion reigned throughout the land,
And, on the borders, peace.

Yet, in the streets, the people cried,
"It is a shameful thing,
Now all the Gods are more than kind,
This madness of the King."

A gipsy-girl his heart ensnares,
And all his days and nights
Are spent, unmindful of the State,
In profitless delights.

The Maharani sits alone,
Her lashes wet with tears,
While all the pearls and gems of state
Her gipsy rival wears.

In vain they bring her silken robes,
In vain her maidens sing,
She will but sigh, "When shall I see
The beauty of the king?"

The gipsy's youth is all but o'er,
Her time for children past,
The people say, "Without a son
How shall the kingdom last?"

And louder yet the murmurs grow,
O folly and disgrace,
And faster still the Rani's tears
Flow down her youthful face.

One night, a faithful handmaiden
Unto her chamber came;
"Presence," she said, "'tis thou alone
Canst save the king from shame.

"The gipsy girl we drugged to-night
And stole her silks away,
Rise thou, and play the wanton's part
Until the dawn of day.

"We gave a philtre to the king
To set his brain afire,
And thou shalt take the gipsy's place
To solace his desire.

"Thus lying joyous on thy heart,
If all propitious be,
He, thinking of the gipsy's charms,
Shall bring a son to thee.

"If this, oh, Rani, thou canst do
Thy virtue will be great;
Thou from himself wilt save the king,
And from the king the state.

"But ah, remember, he must go
Before the skies grow light,
Ere yet the philtre leave his brain
Too clear in sense and sight.

"For should he dream that thou art thou,
And realise the truth
Too suddenly, he would not spare
Thy beauty or thy youth.

"In some auspicious, later hour,
If our desire be gained,
The tender sequence of the fraud
To him can be explained."

The Maharani rose and smiled,
She pushed her hair away,
"Ah, if he stay with me to-night,
At daybreak let him slay!"

Then round her slender neck she twined
The pearls as white as milk;
Her breast was all too young to fill
The crimson bodice silk.

She blushed to wear the gipsy's robes,
And yet they seemed to bring
A subtle sweetness to her soul,
Since well they knew the king.

And "Ah," she said, "I love him so,
I tremble with delight;
Would that I knew the gipsy's spell
To charm him through the night!"

Then to her rival's bower she went,
(Who far, unconscious, lay,)
And waited in a flush of joy
Till he should pass that way.

He came in all his jewelled state,
His dagger by his side,
The philtre filled him with desire
Fierce to be satisfied.

His youth and beauty changed her love
To passion at its best,
And round his neck she wound her arms
And took him to her breast.

She was so sweet, she loved so well,
Before the night was past,
He murmured, "Ah, my gipsy queen,
Thou lovest me at last!"

The watchful woman by the door
 Waited in hope and fear,
Praying the Gods that all go well
 For her she held so dear.

And when the night had somewhat waned,
 And sleep had closed his eyes,
"Presence," she said, "unclasp thine arms
 And bid thy lover rise."

The little Rani held him close
 And smiling answered low,
"My lover is so sweet to me
 I cannot let him go."

And once again she came to warn;
 The Rani begged reprieve,
"Love is so sweet and new to me
 How can I let him leave?"

A third time came the handmaiden,
 Sleep weighted both their eyes,
The Rani sighed, "I love him so,
 I cannot bid him rise!"

Thus all three slept until the dawn
 Rose tremulous and clear,
And soon the sunlight through the room
 Pierced like a golden spear.

It struck the king across the eyes,
He rose alert and keen,
He saw the pearls he knew so well,
But not the gipsy queen.

The Rani waking, held him still,
He tore her arms apart.
"This for thy treachery," he cried,
And stabbed her through the heart.

Happiness

“**N**OTHING succeeds as doth succeed Success!”
None who have known Success assent to this.

Have I not kissed beloved, consenting lips,
And through my kisses cursed their sweet consent?
Turning my face towards the desert stars
To pray the chillness of the midnight breeze
Might cool the passion that demanded mine.

And all the Gold, wrenched from the stubborn rock,
The utmost Glory, gathered on the Field,
When have they proved a lure to Happiness?

Happiness is so reticent and shy,
So transient, so illusive, and so young,
Most men but glimpse her through the morning flowers,
Or the faint mirage of a passing dream.

She meets her lovers on the summer seas,
Among the shadows of the quiet hills,
Grants them, perchance, a moment's ecstasy,
Then, ere they realise her, she is gone.

Dreamers of Dreams arrest her wayward steps,
And to the Young her kindest kiss is given.
But none have claimed the maiden for a bride,
Set her obedient by the daily hearth,
Or raised a child of theirs from happiness.

Happiness to Success is as a rose,
Perfumed and dewy, in a nest of leaves,
Is to a carven gem of emerald
Circling a ruby on a golden stem.

Take thou the jewel, Friend, and let me lose
What soul I have, among the Lotus flowers!

Droit du Seigneur

THE Aspens shiver by the osier bed,
The waters ripple in September's sun
Among the rushes, where I sit and dream
My basket empty and my work undone.

I watch the spirals of blue smoke arise
Above the green of oak and chestnut tree;
Only one week of wistful weariness
Before as custom bids, I go to thee.

But, wilt thou take thy right? My brother's wife
Went to the castle on her wedding-day,
And when thou saw'st her shivering dissent
Didst thou not say in kindness, "Go thy way,

"Untouched by me, even as thou hast come,
Save in the way of gifts; take this and this."
And she, poor little fool, rejoined her mate,
Unharm'd, *unhonoured*, even by a kiss.

Last week I saw her at her cottage door
Nursing her clumsy child; no wistful sigh
For what her peasant arms might yet have held,
A child of thine—broke her serenity.

Ah, if I knew how thou wilt deal with me.

Who knows? who knows? They tell me I am fair,
And any beauty that I may possess
Have I not kept it for thy sake with care?

To guard a pallor that might blush for thee,
Shading the sunrays from this face of mine,
Smoothing my hands with milk from elder-flowers
Lest the rough skin should jar the silk of thine.

Ah, how I loved thee, even as a child
Watching thee ride across the village square,
The curls blown backwards from thy vivid face,
Thy pennons lifted on the summer air.

How I have envied brides who passed thy gates,
And when I heard the village gossips say
Thou wert not as thy fathers; oft refused
To claim thy privilege, turned away

So glad and yet so sad,—it well may be
They will not notice me, those eyes of thine;
Yet surely love will find some soft appeal
To draw their gaze to me, thy lips to mine.

My cousin loves me; in his kindly eyes
Lies the clear promise of a calm content.
I, wedding him, ensure his happiness
As thou ensurest mine, shouldst thou consent.

Ah, if thou shouldst be kind and set thy seal
On me and mine for ever. Women know
The secret ways of love and all its lore
If,—ah, dear God in Heaven, if this were so!

My firstborn should be thine, then all my life
Will, and must, keep the memory of thee.
Even as thou art printed on my heart,
So on my being must thy impress be.

No second lover and no second child
Efface the imprint of the first who came,
And on the golden sands of youth inscribed
Lightly, but so indelibly, his name.

Many a custom, many an old abuse
Thy people cherish still, unknown to thee;
My cousin whispers me among the reeds,
“What has the priest to do with thee and me?

“Let us forestall our marriage, thus thy child
Will be thy husband’s, not a lawless thing
Born of injustice.” Ah, how blind men are,
How strange their words of careless kindness ring.

It is the sweetest justice of our lives
That once, ere settling to our lifelong task
Of serving boors and raising sons to them
One golden moment, too divine to ask

In our most daring prayers, is flung to us
By our time honoured custom's strange decree,
One perfect hour of radiant romance
Is lent to us; will it be lent to me?

Rarely men understand our way of love;
How that to women in their wedding hours
Lover and priest and king are blent in one,
Hence the awed worship of these hearts of ours.

At times love for a little lifts the veil
And men and women see each other's heart
But swiftly passion comes, obscuring all,
And thus the nearing souls are swept apart.

To us love is a sacred rite; to men
Custom, perhaps affection, or desire.
Before we hold our lovers in our arms
They are too fiercely amorous to inquire.

And after too indifferent; thus our souls
Remain an unread chapter to the end,
And those whose very life is blent with ours
Cannot be called with justice even friend.

Ah me, I dream and dream: my basket lies
Unfilled beside me, while the aspens part
Their trembling leaves, and show the castle walls
That rest my eyes and draw my anxious heart,

Because they hold its treasure. Ah, Seigneur,
So loved, so longed for, passing strange it seems
That I shall speak to thee, to whom I speak
Daily in thought, and nightly through my dreams.

Thou may'st misunderstand. Excess of love
Takes the pale lips of coldness or of art.
And yet my eyes must surely find some way
To show the white heat burning at my heart!

Seigneur, not so dissimilar am I
From thee and thine. Thou know'st thy father's ways,
Aye, and his father's; much the castle blood
Mixed with the village stream in former days.

Signs of more brilliant lineage than my own
Many have marked in me. Take heed of this;
Find me not too unworthy of thine arms;
These lips are thine knowing no other kiss.

Think; if thou givest me an hour's delight
It will be all my life will ever know.
Seigneur, have pity on this love of mine
And lend thyself to me before I go

Back to my narrow life. The whitest star
May let its pure and trembling beauty rest
In the dim silver of the smallest pool;
Wherefore not thou a moment on my breast?

I am thine own by immemorial right,
 Stoop thou and take that privilege of thine;
An hour's dalliance in thy life, Seigneur,
 And an eternal memory in mine!

The Fisherman's Bride

THE great grey waves, with an angry moan,
Rush in on the patient sand.
The spray from their crests is backwards blown
By the strong wind from the land.

As curls are blown from a maiden's face
And flutter behind her free,
The spindrift blows from the waves that race
From stress of the outer sea.

The restless wind has ever a sigh
And the waves are salt as tears,
Maybe because of the dead who lie
Where never the sunlight peers.

One curl of his hair is more to me
Than a thousand waves of thine,
Yet is his life in thy charge, oh, sea,
And also and therefore mine.

Great sins are written against thy name
In records of olden times.

Art thou not filled with sorrow and shame
Remembering ancient crimes?

Then spare, oh, spare this lover of mine,
Thou queen of a million ships,
Content thee with that coral of thine
And leave me my lover's lips!

The End

IN the past I have craved for many a thing.
And ever you answered "No,"
Now I would ask you for one thing more;
For God's sake let me go!

Truly the Greeks were wise who smiled,
Saying, in days gone by,
Love has only the heart of a child
And the wings of a butterfly!

(Ah, for the cabined sampans, floating free,
Ah, for the tropic moonlight nights, that fling
Unnecessary silver on a sea
Itself with phosphorescent light aglow.
Ah, for the waving palms along the shore.)

Craft, long laid up in a dockyard dry,
Wearily yearn to feel
The cool caresses of living water
Pressing against the keel.

A ship remembers the open sky
Anchored in roadstead ease

And all that the wind and waves have taught her
In far-off perilous seas.

Amidst the strife of clamorous speeches
And eager gold-snatching hands,
The soul grows faint for the yellow beaches,
The loneliness of the wind-swept reaches,
And the calm of Eastern lands.
My foot is athrill for the steel of the stirrup,
My palms are astir for the grip of an oar
The whole of my body is sick for the sea
And the peace of a desolate shore.

Perhaps you gave me what you call love,
(I had called it another name)
Bunt anyway, I am tired of playing;
Take all the stakes of the sorry game.
I wonder you thought me worth betraying.
But what is there now that is worth the saying
Since the end must be the same?

I shall piece together my broken youth,
If aught of youth remain,
And when at last the wreck of me reaches,
Beyond the lilt of persuasive speeches,
(I question if ever you spoke the truth)
The palm-tree shade of the coral beaches
The cool retreat of the Cinnamon grove,
Peace will find me again.

For Youth, who sleeps so soundly and so well,
On any couch and under any stars,
Shall join with Rest and weave a magic spell
To soothe the memory of my prison bars.

Serenity shall raise pavilions o'er me,
Freedom and dreams console me with a smile,
Hope, the Eternal Mirage, dance before me,
And Love,—no more of love for me awhile!

I seek, to celebrate my glad release,
The Tents of Silence and the Camp of Peace.

That little island! surf-circled, it waits
On the sapphirine waves for me,
To the right of the fairway through the Straits
As you sail to the China Sea.

A pile built hut and a captive boat,
At the foot of the wavewashed stair afloat,
Blue water abreak upon the beach,
The soft, vague sound of Malayan speech,
Ah, the sun-gilt rest of that island shore,
Mine the folly to strive for more!

I shall go the way of the open sea,
To the lands I knew before you came,
And the cool clean breezes shall blow from me
The memory of your name.

The transient sorrow you cause me now
Will fade away in the distance dim,
But Love is a God, and I wonder how
You will make your peace with him!

The Island of Desolation: Song of Mahomed Akram

HERE on the Island of my Desolation
I look across the wastes of azure sea;
None of the ships that pass in exaltation
Have any cargo or commands for me.

Not in the red of any joyous morning,
Not in the gold of any sunset light,
Will they run up the flag to give me warning
That the so longed-for vessel looms in sight.

Sometimes I light the beacon fires of passion
To lure frail pleasure craft towards the shore,
Join the night revels in half-hearted fashion
Only to wake more lonely than before.

Now and again some friendly soul has landed,
Taken his careless welcome, sailed away;
And in the time of tempest, ships have stranded,
Spilling rich merchandise about the bay.

White bones among the mangroves glisten dimly,
Drift with the water, in the sunshine bleach,

While the gaunt ribs of wreckage rising grimly
Guard the forlornness of the wind-swept beach.

Inland, among the fern and seeding grasses
Where the Acacia, silken-tasselled, waves,
The summer wind sighs softly as it passes
Over the green of half forgotten graves.

Little I heed; my eyes gaze ever seaward,
Straining to glimpse the ship I never see,
My constant soul, set like a compass, theeward,
Even as thine was always turned from me.

Ah, how I loved thee! Hoping to forget thee,
Where are the things I did not vainly try?
But every cell and fibre still regret thee,
Even in death remembrance will not die.

If thou shouldst seek me (though thou comest never,
My hopes, like Lighthouse rays, stream forth to thee)
Thou wouldst still find me faithful, watching ever,
Or buried with my face towards the sea.

The Date-Garden

I DREAMT last night you were mine indeed,
And I prayed the dream to stay,
But this world of ours with reckless haste
Rushed on to another day.

I thought we slept on the Desert sands,
Where the old date-gardens lie,
And a golden mist of quivering stars
Was scattered across the sky.

There, in the limitless silences,
Where only the jackals live,
You were kind to me as you are not kind,
And gave what you will not give.

And when the hands were fallen apart,
And the longing lips grown loth,
A little wind from under the stars
Came down and caressed us both.

Then, leaning against your heart, I said,
Ah, it were a lovely thing
If from this blossoming time of ours
Some flower of life should spring.

And though mankind, with its narrow sight,
Might christen it child of shame,
The people's heart, which is always true,
Would give it a sweeter name.

"Love-child": name that is tender with love;
With joyous passion and youth.
Man's own sad laws have blinded his eyes,
But some of us see the truth!

If mine own hand had written my fate,
I know I had rather been
Fruit of a wild and exquisite love
Than the child of dull routine.

Should I not give to children of yours
Created in sheer delight,
The cool clear soul of this star-lit waste,
The peace of the Desert night?

And all our fervour and youth and force,
Would they not feel the same?
Surely the torch of life should be lit
At the whitest heat of the flame!

Lean back, lean back, till your loosened hair
Lies soft on the Desert sands,
That all yourself may abandoned be
To my reverent lips and hands.

When first I saw you, My Well-Beloved,
In my secret heart I said,
Ah, that the lips might follow the eyes
And feast where these have fed!

And now that thine own have set mine free
(Be still, O, my heart, be still)
I only fear that my life may wane
Before they have had their will.

Thus I spoke in the visions of night,
As I may not speak by day,
But the cruel hours with reckless speed
Have carried my dream away.

The night is over, the stars have paled,
The magic of sleep has flown,
The white-eyed Day, slipping into the world,
Found me, as ever, alone.

Trees of Wharnccliffe House

O_H, green and leafy Wharnccliffe trees
That tremble to and fro,
You rustle in the languid breeze
And catch the evening glow.
Across the dusty gloomy street,
I note your tender sheen,
But unto me it is not sweet,
Who see what I have seen.

The slender Coco palms I crave
Beside the sea,
Where every phosphorescent wave
Leaps up in ecstasy,
Towards the tangled stars above
That sparkled in the blue,
These are the things I know and love.
How can I care for you?

I always feel a sense of loss
If, at the close of day,
I cannot see the Southern Cross
Break through the gathered grey,

Nor watch the liquid moonlight gleam
Among the temples white,
And realise that lovely dream,
We call an Eastern night.

Though I, impatient of the heat,
Forth from the window lean
To cool my sight across the street
Amidst your shaded green,
Your leaves, refreshed by summer showers,
Are naught to me, who feast
My fancy on those other flowers
That burn about the East.

For I have seen the Lotus bloom
On lakes like inland seas,
And white Magnolias, through the gloom,
Moonlight among the trees.
Have watched the pale Tuberose, aglow
With phosphorescent light,
And Water-lilies lying low
On sacred tanks at night.

Have wandered where the Moghra flowers
Exhale their scent at noon,
And dreamt sweet dreams where Jasmin bowers
Grow white beneath the moon.
Have seen the Poppies' crimson wave
O'erflow the land for miles

And Roses, on an Eastern grave
Turn even Death to smiles.

By night, my fancy spreads her wings
In visions that console,
But all day long, remembered things
Are dragging at my soul.
I want the silver on the sea,
The surf along the shore,
The ruined Mosque, whose weeds grow free,
Where Princes prayed of yore.

I want the lonely, level sands
Stretched out beneath the sun,
The sadness of the old, old lands,
Whose destiny is done,
The glory and the grace, that cling
About the mountain crest
Where tombs of many a faithless king
Guard, faithfully, their rest.

Not lightly would I speak of Love,
Or estimate his power,
But every star that wheels above,
And each enamelled flower
That sends persuasive influence
To touch the human mind,
Appeals to some strange, inner sense
That Love can never find.

Love always needs his ally, Youth,
Or lost is all his charm;
A sunset is a golden truth
Nor age nor ill can harm.
And loveliness will lend the earth
Its radiance and sheen
If but one rosebud come to birth,
One single leaf grow green.

Ah, waving trees of Wharnccliffe House,
That tremble to and fro,
Old dreams and fancies you arouse,
Old fires you set aglow.
Your shaded greenness soothes the eye,
Worn out with dusty hours,
But still I crave that Eastern sky,
Those brilliant Orient flowers!

All Farewells Should Be Gently Spoken

*A*Y, smooth your hair for another lover,
Refold the satin, restring the pearls,
Lest those who will take my place discover
Discoloured tints and dishevelled curls.

Lift up those delicate lips that mine
Reddened with kisses but yesterday,
Let others drink the dregs of the wine
We two have tasted and flung away.

I wish you well; go gather the gold,
The little triumphs you hold so dear,
For you the pasture, the sheltered fold:
Ways smoothed by custom and fenced by **fear**.

You could not have lived aloof, afar
In golden deserts, by lonely streams,
Be rich, be courted, be all you are,
But seek not silence, nor love nor dreams.

Yet what am I that my song should shame you,
What strength have I, that I call you weak?

Ah, Love alone has the right to blame you
And He is a God and will not speak.

One thing there is yet to be glad of; Fate
In making us one has not left us three.
No child shall inherit our love's estate
To be false like you or forlorn like me.

What if your sweet and treacherous eyes
Had smiled at me from a child of mine,
Your delicate lips, so apt at lies,
Lived and laughed, a perpetual sign

Of fitful passion and frenzied hours
That now are utterly passed away,
Dead and forgotten as last year's flowers
And all sweet things that have had their day.

Yet, last farewells should be gently spoken,
And times of pleasure let no man grudge.
Of things once loved, though his heart be broken,
A lover has never the right to judge.

Garden Song

FORGIVE me, in that I kissed your lips
Too fiercely or too soon;
It was the fault of the nightingale
Singing against the moon.
If Reason swerved in a brief eclipse
The while I sinned my sin,
Opposed to Love, it must always fail
Since Love must always win.

The flowers rejoiced in that kiss of ours,
Even as they were fain
The great night moths should ravage their hearts,
Seeking for golden gain:
Bringing them pollen from other flowers,
Set open through the night
To play their motionless, mystic parts
In Nature's marriage rite.

And who was I, to resist, withstand
That charm of fragrant gloom?
A summer night has a thousand powers
Of scent and stars and bloom.

Forgive me, in that my errant hand
 Caressed your silken hair,
Oh lay the blame on the Orange flowers,
 You *know* how sweet they were!

Invitation to the Jungle

THE Jungle gloom is dim and cool,
And, even through the noonday heat,
Among the reeds beside the pool
The silent air is freshly sweet.

Though desert winds, sand-laden, pass,
And all the tree-tops bend and sigh,
No breezes stir the flower-filled grass
Beside the lake where we shall lie.

We shall not hear the Temple bells,
The tom-tom's sad insistent beat,
The far Bazaar, whose murmur swells
With eager cries and restless feet.

We shall not know the myriad cares
That make the Home's soft tyranny,
And all the Temple's lip-worn prayers,
Its ordered gifts, will pass us by.

Those lip-worn prayers; whose sense is lost,
Effaced by long and tearful use,

By thousands daily skywards tost,
While still the Gods reject,—refuse,—

Let others pay the reverence due
With waving lights and sacred flowers.
I pray no more except to you,
My faith is in this love of ours.

And I shall twine the Kuskus grass
To shield the thing I hold so dear.
What if the fierce-eyed Panthers pass?
I know their ways and have no fear.

The jungle is my native land
And love shall smooth its path for you:
Ah, could I make you understand,
How well it is, this thing you do.

You leave the world, and passing by
Its tarnished gold and futile strife,
Gain freedom, love, the open sky,
The flowers upon the Tree of Life!

The Seasons

YOUTH

*W*OULD God, that I could love thee less!
My days are lost in dream of thee.
I do my work in weariness,
Till kindly twilight sets me free.

Throughout the night thy beauty burns,
The more possessed, the more desired.
Until another day returns
To find me desperately tired.

MIDDLE AGE

Ah, me, that I could love thee more!
I know thee kind; I see thee fair,
Why can I not, as oft of yore,
In soft caresses lose my care?

At times life's dragging afternoon
Is quickened by thy morning charms;
I seek thee, but alas! I soon
Forget thee, even in thine arms!

AGE

These lovers! Who can understand
Their vivid joy, their wild despair?
He does but live to kiss her hand,
And she would die to touch his hair!

Love is an enemy to Rest,
Which surely is Life's dearest good,
Yet, something stirs within my breast
And murmurs, "Once you understood!"

The Purple Dusk

SINCE the white day must dawn again so soon,
And early love is diffident and shy,
Oh, charitable clouds, conceal the moon,
Grant the indulgence of an unstarred sky!

Ah, silver surf, abreak along the shore,
Cease for a while thy restless ebb and flow.
The silence trembles with thy sullen roar
And the soft voice I love is very low.

Wind of the Desert, leave the Orange flowers
To spill their sweetness over sand and sea,
Come, all unperfumed, to this couch of ours;
Blow through his curls and bring their scent to me.

Ah, Time, who brought this treasure to my breast,
Knowing so well that cruelty of thine,
I would die now, and leave thee at thy best,
Ere thou hast torn my lover's lips from mine.

Love Is the Symbol of a Sacred Thing

WHO scans the pedigree, nor shrinks to trace
Some link unlawful? Yet he had not been
Had this illicit love not taken place,
Or that forbidden face remained unseen.

They who say *any* love is coarse or light,—
Even the brief caresses of an hour,
The careless kisses of a summer night,—
Condemn the root, not knowing of the flower.

When graceless actions of some casual twain
Seem but the surge of Youth, the heat of Wine,
His search for Pleasure, or her hope of Gain,
May be the vassals of some vast design.

For who can tell what life may come to birth,
Prophet or Captain of the time to be
As from light seed, flung on the careless Earth
Breaks forth a flower, that scented mystery.

And though from an embrace no fruit may spring
Or from a kiss no spark be kindled, still

Love is the Symbol of a sacred thing,
Through which the Unseen Powers work their Will.

Those unknown Gods, who move behind a veil
No mortal sense may ever hope to lift;
We only know they falter not nor fail,
And they have granted us one lovely gift.

This Gift of Love, which we condemn, despise,
Bending it to the baseness of our will.
Yet in the lowest depths that passion lies
It surely keeps some heaven-born fragrance still.

Therefore, O you, who find the Perfect Way,
Scorn not the lesser, lighter loves you see,
Unworthy though they seem, yet who shall say
Fate works not through them, for the Days to Be?

On Deck

TRULY the couch is hard to outward seeming,
The vessel sways on the unquiet sea,
Yet what care I? who nightly in my dreaming
Lay your soft hair between the planks and me.

Storms have delayed us, and the cargo, shifted,
Lists us to leeward as the breakers roll,
I had not cared, not even though we drifted
Out to uncharted oceans round the Pole.

There was a Rani once, who long neglected,
Nightly arrayed herself in silk and gold,
Waiting the footsteps, loved and long expected—
Waiting the lover, whom she could not hold.

Once on her wedding night, indeed, he sought her,
Once, and once only; then his ardour died.
All sequent evenings of her youth but brought her
A great desire ever unsatisfied.

Nightly she lay, her tears and jewels gleaming
In the dim silver from the stars above,

Nightly her limbs, unconscious in her dreaming,
Still took the tender attitudes of love.

For twenty years hope lingered, unabated,
Though beauty lost its bloom and youth its fire,
Never there came the step for which she waited,
Never the lover of her heart's desire.

Yet who shall weigh what subtle consolation
Solaced the Rani in her lonely sleep;
When her locked arms in love's divine elation
Held him whom, waking, she had failed to keep.

Thus I, who watched the alien planets gleaming
Over the waters of this restless sea,
Drift back to sleep, and ever in my dreaming
Lay your soft hair between the deck and me.

The Mirrored Stars of Tangier

IT was the darkest hour before the dawn,
The orange-scented air was strangely sweet
And stars flashed brilliantly beneath our feet,
Reflected in the level sands, that lay
Lonely and mirror-like, around the Bay.

Lightly we walked on those reflected stars,
Gleaming among the drift and tangled spars
Left by the waves upon that lucent lawn
Whose flowers were planets.

Then ourselves we flung
Down on the soft, wet sand, and all the skies,
Where countless, jewelled constellations hung,
Lay near and lovely to our wistful eyes.

Upon one silver star my lips were passed;
A vivid gem, than shone in Cassiopea,
No longer far away, and unpossessed,
But close beneath me, tremulously clear.

And I, who love a thing remote and far,
Drew courage from that sand-encircled star.
For, as my lips caressed its silver fire,
So might my arms embrace my Heart's Desire.

At Simrole Tank

"*M*AY you be tortured living, burned when dead,
Your camels die, and virtue leave your wife!"
But he, who sat beneath the Peepul, said,
"Why wish him more than average human life?"

The Guru's Tale: The Enchanted Night

*W*HEN falling evening cooled the air,
The Guru, in the twilight dim,
Caressed his Chela's silken hair
And told this tale of love to him.

"Once, on the march to Bikanir,
I, halting by a wayside well,
Beheld a woman drawing near
Who cast on me a magic spell.

"Not hers the beauty, day by day
Soliciting by tender lures,
But that which strikes the heart straightway,
And instant victory ensures.

"She murmured, stretching forth her arms,
Her red, love-thirsty lips apart,
'At sunset,—under yonder palms,—
Come to my garden,—and my heart!'

"Ah, that unending afternoon!

The sun seemed tethered in the sky.
I felt my inmost senses swoon
With my desire's intensity.

"The silver twilight came at length,
I reached the garden cool and sweet,
And all my eager youth and strength
Lay at her small and jewelled feet.

"Three nights we gathered our delight:
I had almost kissed her lips away,
Yet still her eyes, alert and bright,
Resented the invading day.

"Alas, the fourth delirious eve
Ended in terrified surprise:
Her lamp alight she was wont to leave
For love allured her through the eyes.

"This night she cried in passionate pain,
Her heart seemed broken in her breast,
'Thy beauty is too great a strain,
Let us put out the light and rest.'

("Perchance you hold the speech too strong,
Or my recording it, conceit,

Ah, surely one who has lived so long
May own her words were true as sweet.)

"Then I, half rising to obey,
Beheld a strange and terrible sight,
'Take not,' she said, 'thysself away,
For I will quench the offending light.'

"She raised her arm, bejewelled and small,
It lengthened,—stretched across the room,—
Put out the light on the opposite wall,
And then,—diminished in the gloom!

"My pulses stopped, my passion died;
The square, rose-scented chamber ran
To thrice our length, from side to side,
And yet her arm had bridged the span!

"I wrenched myself from her embrace,
And, heeding not her desperate cry,
Fled from that strange, enchanted place
As deer before the Cheetah fly.

"Beneath the starlight, cool and clear,
I raced across the sands alone,
And realized in stricken fear
No mortal mistress I had known.

"My spirit told me, as I sped,
Some tortured soul, escaped from hell,
One of the lonely, loveless dead
Had risen and wooed me by the well.

"Ah, Best-Beloved, though Youth be sweet,
He leads us to strange depths and heights.
Now leave me; later we shall meet
For worship with the Circling Lights."

Among the Fuchsias

CALL me not to a secret place
When daylight dies away,
Tempt me not with thine eager face
And words thou shouldst not say.
Entice me not with a child of thine,
Ah, God, if such might be,
For surely a man is half divine
Who adds another link to the line
Whose last link none may see.

Call me not to the Lotus lake
That drooping fuchsias hide,
What if my latent youth awake
And will not be denied?
Ah, tempt me not for I am not strong
(Thy mouth is a budded kiss)
My days are empty, my nights are long.
Ah, why is a thing so sweet so wrong
As thy temptation is?

The Tower of Victory

THE starlight night was cool and dim,
Soft clouds beflecked the tranquil sky.
She climbed the hill, and reached with him,
The carven Tower of Victory.

The Tower that rears its lonely head
Above the Jungle, wild and vast,
And dreams, perchance, of warriors dead
Who held the hills in ages past.

Sweet fragrance drifted o'er the land
From Champa trees and Jasmine flowers;
The lovers wandered, hand in hand,
Through long, and all uncounted, hours.

And when the night was mid-way spent
They climbed the dark and broken stair,
Half stifled from the acrid scent
Of countless bats, that harboured there.

The topmost steps had fall'n away,
A time-worn ladder took their place,

Until she felt the night-wind play
In coolness on her upturned face.

At last, they reached the highest stage,
Wind swept and open to the stars.
The battlements were worn with age
But waving grasses hid the scars.

The lonely Jungle lay serene,
Beneath the star-bejewelled skies,
They turned them from the silver scene
To seek once more each other's eyes.

But when he caught her to his breast
She shrank in delicate dismay;
So, chilled, he left her uncaressed
And drew his eager arms away.

Her eyes beneath their lashes hid
The tender tears that left them dim,
As down the ladder-rungs he slid
And drew it swiftly after him.

"It must," he cried, "be naught or all;
And I shall come no more to thee
Till from the Tower I hear thee call
To say thou wilt be kind to me!"

"Stay *now*," she begged. He would not heed,
But down the ruined, twisting stair

He crushed his way with reckless speed
And reached the scented outer air.

But when he scarce had left the Tower
He paused, and felt his anger cease,
Such was the magic of the hour,
Its lovely mystery and peace.

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Two eyes among the thickets glow;
A stealthy rustle stirs the air;
The Tigress springs, and lays him low,
Then bears him, senseless, to her lair.

There was no sound; he gave no cry;
The careless stars looked on serene.
The Jungle's sudden tragedy
Remained unheard, unknown, unseen.

While on the Tower, she cried in tears,
"Return to me, Beloved of mine,
Forgive me for my foolish fears
Within those tender arms of thine.

"Oh, Brightest Star of all the night,
Come back, and shed thy light on me,
And thou shalt learn, to thy delight,
How more than kind I am to thee!"

In vain she cried, in vain she wept,
At times in solitary woe,
Towards the inner edge she crept
And looked, but dared not leap, below.

Before she died, three weary days
She called in anguish on his name.
By twilight cool, or noonday blaze,
Her luckless lover never came.

And since men rarely mount the stones
That form the Tower's ruined stair,
It may be that her small, white bones
Still wait in lonely silence there.

Ah, when Love comes, his wings are swift,
His ways are full of quick surprise;
'Tis well for those who have the gift
To seize him even as he flies!

The City: Song of Mahomed Akram

SINNING, and sinned against, the City lay,
Burnt by the sun's caresses day by day,
Passive, defenceless, with her latest breath
Conceiving at his pleasure plague and death.

Relentlessly he poured his ardent rays
Into her cloistered courts and secret ways,
While the hot gold he spilt upon the plain
Rose from the furnace of the sands again.

Beneath a sullen sunset, dimly red,
Rent by the lamentations for the dead,
Whose burning-ghats defiled the stagnant air,
The breathless city waited in despair.

Then came the flutter of a sudden breeze,
Fragrant with scents of aromatic trees,
Cool with the magic freshness of the sea,
And the dry maize-leaves shivered restlessly.

The wind went onwards, to the outer gate,
Thrilled with soft pity for the City's fate,

Dispensing coolness, passed the inner wall,
And fanned the lips of those about to fall.

Swept in his freshness through the stifling lane,
Flew through low casements, fluttered forth again,
Winnowed the market-place whose floor was red,
And lightly smoothed the cereclothes of the dead.

Stole through the women's chambers, close and sweet,
Lifted their clinging silks from face to feet,
Cooled the pale brows that glimmered in the dusk,
Then gained the open faintly tinged with musk.

Entered the prison, soothed the ring-worn wrist,
The deeper wounds of fettered ankles kissed,
Giving the only freedom that was craved;
Freedom from heat. Thus was the City saved.

His coolness left her fresh as any flower,
And to restrict the sun's relentless power,
He veiled her with soft clouds and bid them stay
Till all the heat-wrought ill should pass away.

I would have asked such aid of thee, had I but dared,
Thou couldst have done as much for me, hadst thou but
cared.

The Masters

O H, Masters, you who rule the world,
Will you not wait with me awhile,
When swords are sheathed and sails are furled,
And all the fields with harvest smile?
I would not waste your time for long,
I ask you but, when you are tired,
To read how by the weak, the strong
Are weighed and worshipped and desired.

When weary of the Mart, the Loom,
The Withering-house, the Rifle-blocks,
The Barrack-square, the Engine-room,
The pick-axe, ringing on the rocks,—
When tents are pitched and work is done,
While restful twilight broods above,
By fresh-lit lamp, or dying sun,
See in my songs how women love.

We shared your lonely watch by night,
We knew you faithful at the helm,
Our thoughts went with you through the fight,
That saved a soul,—or wrecked a realm.

Ah, how our hearts leapt forth to you,
In pride and joy, when you prevailed,
And when you died, serene and true:
—We wept in silence when you failed!

Oh, brain, that did not gain the gold!
Oh, arm, that could not wield the sword,
Here is the love, that is not sold,
Here are the hearts to hail you Lord!

You played and lost the game? What then?
The rules are harsh and hard we know,
You, still, oh, brothers, are the men
Whom we in secret reverence so.
Your work was waste? Maybe your share
Lay in the hour you laughed and kissed;
Who knows but what your son shall wear
The laurels that his father missed?

Ay, you who win, and you who lose,
Whether you triumph,—or despair,—
When your returning footsteps choose
The homeward track, our love is there.
For, since the world is ordered thus,
To you the fame, the stress, the sword,
We can but wait, until to us
You give yourselves, for our reward.

To Whaler's deck and Coral beach,
To lonely Ranch and Frontier-Fort,
Beyond the narrow bounds of speech
I lay the cable of my thought.
I fain would send my thanks to you,
(Though who am I, to give you praise?)
Since what you are, and work you do,
Are lessons for our easier ways.

'Neath alien stars your camp-fires glow,
I know you not,—your tents are far.
My hope is but in song to show,
How honoured and how dear you are.

I Shall Forget

ALTHOUGH my life, which thou hast scarred and shaken,
Retains awhile some influence of thee,
As shells, by faithless waves long since forsaken,
Still murmur with the music of the Sea,

I shall forget. Not thine the haunting beauty,
Which, once beheld, for ever holds the heart,
Or, if resigned from stress of Fate or Duty,
Takes part of life away:—the dearer part.

I gave thee love; thou gavest but Desire.
Ah, the delusion of that summer night!
Thy soul vibrated at the rate of Fire;
Mine, with the rhythm of the waves of Light.

It is my love for thee that I regret,
Not thee, thyself, and hence,—I shall forget!

The Lament of Yasmini, the Dancing-Girl

AH, what hast thou done with that Lover of mine?
The Lover who only cared for thee?
Mine for a handful of nights, and thine
For the Nights that Are and the Days to Be,
The scent of the Champa lost its sweet—
So sweet it was in the Times that Were!—
Since His alone, of the numerous feet
That climb my steps, have returned not there.
Ahi, Yasmini, return not there!

Art thou yet athrill at the touch of His hand,
Art thou still athirst for His waving hair?
Nay, passion thou never couldst understand,
Life's heights and depths thou wouldst never dare.
The Great Things left thee untouched, unmoved,
The Lesser Things had thy constant care.
Ah, what hast thou done with the Lover I loved,
Who found me wanting, and thee so fair?
Ahi, Yasmini, He found her fair!

Nay, nay, the greatest of all was thine;
The love of the One whom I craved for so,

But much I doubt if thou couldst divine
The Grace and Glory of Love, or know
The worth of the One whom thine arms embraced.
I may misjudge thee, but who can tell?
So hard it is, for the one displaced,
To weigh the worth of a rival's spell.
Ahi, Yasmini, thy rival's spell!

And Thou, whom I loved: have the seasons brought
That fair content, which allured Thee so?
Is it all that Thy delicate fancy wrought?
Yasmini wonders; she may not know.
Yet never the Stars desert the sky,
To fade away in the desolate Dawn,
But Yasmini watches their glory die,
And mourns for her own Bright Star withdrawn.
Ahi, Yasmini, the lonely dawn!

Ah, never the lingering gold dies down
In a sunset flare of resplendent light,
And never the palm-tree's feathery crown
Uprears itself to the shadowy night,
But Yasmini thinks of those evenings past,
When she prayed the glow of the glimmering West
To vanish quickly, that night, at last,
Might bring Thee back to her waiting breast.
Ahi, Yasmini, how sweet that rest!

Yet I would not say that I always weep;
The force, that made such a desperate thing
Of my love for Thee, has not fallen asleep,
The blood still leaps, and the senses sing,
While other passion has oft availed.
(Other Love— Ah, my One, forgive!—)
To aid, when Churus and Opium failed;—
I could not suffer so much and live.
Ahi, Yasmini, who had to live!

Nay, why should I say "Forgive" to Thee?
To whom my lovers and I are naught,
Who granted some passionate nights to me,
Then rose and left me with never a thought!
And yet, ah, yet, for those Nights that Were,
Thy passive limbs and thy loose loved hair,
I would pay, as I *have* paid, all these days,
With the love that kills and the thought that slays.
Ahi, Yasmini, thy youth it slays!

The youthful widow, with shaven hair,
Whose senses ache for the love of a man,
The young Priest, knowing that women are fair,
Who stems his longing as best he can,
These suffer not as I suffer for Thee;
For the Soul desires what the senses crave,
There will never be pleasure or peace for me,

Since He who wounded, alone could save.
Ahi, Yasmini, He will not save!

The torchlight flares, and the lovers lean
Towards Yasmini, with yearning eyes,
Who dances, wondering what they mean,
And gives cold kisses, and scant replies.
They talk of Love, she withholds the name,—
(Love came to her as a Flame of Fire!)
From things that are only a weary shame;
Trivial Vanity;—light Desire.
Ahi, Yasmini, the light Desire!

Yasmini bends to the praise of men,
And looks in the mirror, upon her hand,¹
To curse the beauty that failed her then—
Ah, none of her lovers can understand!
How her whole life hung on that beauty's power,
The spell that waned at the final test,
The charm that paled in the vital hour,—
Which won so many,—yet lost the best!
Ahi, Yasmini, who lost the best!

She leaves the dancing to reach the roof,
With the lover who claims the passing hour,
Her lips are his, but her eyes aloof
While the starlight falls in a silver shower.

¹ Indian women wear a small mirror in a ring on their thumbs.

Let him take what pleasure, what love, he may,
He, too, will suffer ere life be spent,—
But Yasmini's soul has wandered away
To join the Lover, who came,—and went!
Ahi, Yasmini, He came,—and went!

Among the Rice Fields

SHE was fair as a Passion-flower,
 (But little of love he knew.)
Her lucent eyes were like amber wine,
 And her eyelids stained with blue.

He called them the Gates of Fair Desire,
 And the Lakes where Beauty lay,
But I looked into them once, and saw
 The eyes of Beasts of Prey.

He praised her teeth, that were small and white
 As lilies upon his lawn,
While I remembered a tiger's fangs
 That met in a speckled fawn.

She had her way; a lover the more,
 And I had a friend the less.
For long there was nothing to do but wait
 And suffer his happiness.

But now I shall choose the sharpest Kriss
 And nestle it in her breast,
For dead, he is drifting down to sea,
 And his own hand wrought his rest.

The Bride

BEAT on the Tom-toms, and scatter the flowers,
Jasmine, Hibiscus, vermillion and white,
This is the day, and the Hour of Hours,
Bring forth the Bride for her Lover's delight.
Maidens no more, as a maiden shall claim her,
Near, in his Mystery, draweth Desire.
Who, if she waver a moment, shall blame her?
She is a flower, and love is a fire.
Choti Tinchaurya syani hogayi! ¹

Give her the anklets, the rings and the necklace,
Darken her eyelids with delicate Art,
Heighten the beauty, so youthful and fleckless,
By the Gods favoured, oh, Bridegroom thou art!
Twine in thy fingers her fingers so slender,
Circle together the Mystical Fire,
Bridegroom,—a whisper—be gentle and tender,
Choti Tinchaurya knows not desire.
Abhi Tinchaurya syani hogayi!

¹ *Anglice*: Little Tinchaurya has grown up.

Bring forth the silks and the veil that shall cover
Beauty, till yesterday, careless and wild,
Red are her lips for the kiss of a lover,
Ripe are her breasts for the lips of a child.
Centre and Shrine of Mysterious Power,
Chalice of Pleasure and Rose of Delight,
Shyly aware of the swift-coming hour,
Waiting the shade and the silence of night,
Choti Tinchaurya syani hogayi!

Still must the Bridegroom his longing dissemble,
Longing to loosen the silk-woven cord,
Ah, how his fingers will flutter and tremble,
Fingers well skilled with the bridle and sword.
Thine is his valour, oh, Bride, and his beauty,
Thine to possess and re-issue again,
Such is thy tender and passionate duty,
Licit thy pleasure and honoured thy pain.
Choti Tinchaurya syani hogayi!

Choti Tinchaurya, lovely and tender,
Still all unbroken to sorrow and strife.
Come to the Bridegroom who, silk-clad and slender,
Brings thee the Honour and Burden of Life.
Bidding farewell to thy light-hearted playtime,
Worship thy Lover with fear and delight,
Art thou not ever, though slave of his daytime,
Choti Tinchaurya, queen of his night?
Choti Tinchaurya syani hogayi!

Unanswered

SOMETHING compels me, somewhere. Yet I see
No clear command in Life's long mystery.

Oft have I flung myself beside my horse,
To drink the water from the roadside mire,
And felt the liquid through my being course,
Stillling the anguish of my thirst's desire.

A simple want; so easily allayed;
After the burning march; water and shade.

Also I lay against the loved one's heart
Finding fulfilment in that resting-place,
Feeling my longing, quenched, was but a part
Of nature's ceaseless striving for the race.

But now, I know not what they would with me;
Matter or Force or God, if Gods there be.

I wait; I question; Nature heeds me not.
She does but urge in answer to my prayer,
"Arise and do!" Alas, she adds not what;
"Arise and go!" Alas, she says not where!

Ashore

OUT I came from the dancing-place:
The night-wind met me face to face—

A wind off the harbour, cold and keen,
“I know,” it whistled, “where thou hast been.”

A faint voice fell from the stars above—
“Thou? whom we lighted to shrines of Love!”

I found when I reached my lonely room
A faint sweet scent in the unlit gloom.

And this was the worst of all to bear,
For someone had left white lilac there.

The flower you loved, in times that were.

Yasin Khan

*A*y, thou hast found thy kingdom, Yasin Khan,
Thy fathers' pomp and power are thine, at last.
No more the rugged roads of Khorasan,
The scanty food and tentage of the past!

Wouldst thou make war? thy followers know no fear,
Where shouldst thou lead them but to victory?
Wouldst thou have love? thy soft-eyed slaves draw near,
Eager to drain thy strength away from thee.

My thoughts drag backwards to forgotten days,
To scenes etched deeply on my heart by pain;
The thirsty marches, ambuscades, and frays,
The hostile hills, the burnt and barren plain.

Hast thou forgotten how one night was spent,
Crouched in a camel's carcase by the road,
Along which Akbar's soldiers, scouting, went,
And he himself, all unsuspecting, rode.

Did we not waken one despairing dawn,
Attacked in front, cut off in rear, by snow.

Till, like a tiger leaping on a fawn,
Half of the hill crashed down upon the foe?

Once, as thou mournd'st thy lifeless brother's fate,
The red tears falling from thy shattered wrist,
A spent Waziri, forceful still, in hate,
Covered thy heart, ten paces off,—and missed!

Ahi, men thrust a worn and dented sword
Into a velvet-scabbarded repose;
The gilded pageants that salute thee Lord
Cover *one* sorrow-rusted heart, God knows.

Ah, to exchange this wealth of idle days
For one cold reckless night of Khorasan!
To crouch once more before the camp-fire blaze
That lit the lonely eyes of Yasin Khan.

To watch the starlight glitter on the snows,
The plain stretched round us like a waveless sea,
Waiting until thy weary lids should close
To slip my furs and spread them over thee.

How the wind howled about the lonely pass,
While the faint snowshine of that plateau'd space
Lit, where it lay upon the frozen grass,
The mournful, tragic beauty of thy face.

Thou hast enough caressed the scented hair
Of these soft-breasted girls who waste thee so;
Hast thou not sons for every adult year?
Let us arise, O Yasin Khan, and go!

Let us escape from out these prison bars
To gain the freedom of an open sky,
Thy soul and mine, alone beneath the stars,
Intriguing danger, as in days gone by.

Nay; there is no returning, Yasin Khan.
The white peaks ward the passes, as of yore,
The wind sweeps o'er the wastes of Khorasan;—
But thou and I go thitherward no more.

Close, ah, too close, the bitter knowledge clings,
We may not follow where my fancies yearn.
The years go hence, and wild and lovely things,
Their own, go with them, never to return.

Song of Jasoda

HAD I been young I could have claimed to fold thee
For many days against my eager breast;
But, as things are, how can I hope to hold thee
Once thou hast wakened from this fleeting rest?

Clear shone the moonlight, so that thou couldst find me,
Yet not so clear that thou couldst see my face,
Where in the shadow of the palms behind me
I waited for thy steps, for thy embrace.

What reck I now my morning life was lonely?
For widowed feet the ways are always rough.
Though thou hast come to me at sunset only,
Still thou hast come, my Lord, it is enough.

Ah, mine no more the glow of dawning beauty,
The fragrance and the dainty gloss of youth,
Worn by long years of solitude and duty,
I have no bloom to offer thee in truth.

Yet, since these eyes of mine have never wandered,
Still may they gleam with long forgotten light.

Since in no wanton way my youth was squandered,
Some sense of youth still clings to me to-night.

Thy lips are fresh as dew on budding roses,
The gold of dawn still lingers in thy hair,
While the abandonment of sleep discloses
How every attitude of youth is fair.

Thou art so pale, I hardly dare caress thee,
Too brown my fingers show against the white.
Ahi, the glory, that I should possess thee,
Ahi, the grief, but for a single night!

The tulip tree has pallid golden flowers
That grow more rosy as their petals fade;
Such is the splendour of my evening hours
Whose time of youth was wasted in the shade.

I shall not wait to see to-morrow's morning,
Too bright the golden dawn for me,—too bright,—
How could I bear thine eyes' unconscious scorning
Of what so pleased thee in the dimmer light?

It may be wine had brought some brief illusion,
Filling thy brain with rainbow fantasy,
Or youth, with moonlight, making sweet collusion,
Threw an alluring glamour over me.

Therefore I leave thee softly, to awaken

When the first sun rays warm thy blue-veined breast,
Smiling and all unknowing I have taken

The poppied drink that brings me endless rest.

Thus would I have thee rise; thy fancy laden

With the vague sweetness of the bygone night,
Thinking of me as some consenting maiden,

Whose beauty blossomed first for thy delight.

While I, if any kindly visions hover

Around the silence of my last repose,
Shall dream of thee, my pale and radiant lover,
Who made my life so lovely at its close!

Disappointment

O^H, come, Beloved, before my beauty fades,
Pity the sorrow of my loneliness.
I am a Rosebush that the Cypress shades,
No sunbeams find or lighten my distress.

Daily I watch the waning of my bloom.
Ah, piteous fading of a thing so fair!
While Fate, remorseless, weaving at her loom,
Twines furtive silver in my twisted hair.

This noon I watched a tremulous fading rose
Rise on the wind to court a butterfly.
"One speck of pollen, ere my petals close,
Bring me one touch of love before I die!"

But the gay butterfly, who had the power
To grant, refused, flew far across the dell,
And, as he fertilised a younger flower,
The petals of the rose, defrauded, fell.

Such was my fate, thou hast not come to me,
Thine eyes are absent, and thy voice is mute,

Though I am slim, as this Papaya tree,
With breasts out-pointing, even as its fruit.

Beauty was mine, it brought me no caress,
My lips were red, yet there were none to taste,
I saw my youth consume in loneliness,
And all the fervour of my heart run waste.

While I still hoped that Thou wouldst come to me,
I and the garden waited for their Lord.
Here He will rest, beneath this Champa tree;
Hence, all ye spike-set grasses from the sward!

In this cool rillet I shall bathe His feet,
Come, rounded pebbles from a smoother shore.
This is the honey that His lips will eat,
Hasten, O bees, enhance the amber store!

Ripen, ye Custard Apples, round and fair,
Practice your songs, O Bulbuls, on the bough,
Surely some sweeter sweetness haunts the air;
Maybe His feet draw near us, even now!

Disperse, ye fireflies, clustered on the palm,
Love heeds no lamp, he welcomes moonless skies:
Soon shall ye find, O stars, serene and calm,
Your sparkling rivals in my lover's eyes!

Closely I wove my leafy Jasmine bowers,
Hoping to hide my pleasure and my shame,

Where the Lantana's indecisive flowers
Vary from palest rose to orange flame.

Ay, there were lovely hours, 'neath fern and palm,
Almost my aching longing I forgot.
White nights of silence, noons of golden calm,
All past, all wasted, since Thou camest not!

Night after night the Champa trees distilled
Their cruel sweetness on the careless air.
Noon after noon I watched the Bulbuls build,
And saw with hungry eyes the Sun-birds pair.

None came, and none will come; no use to wait,—
Youth's fragrance dies, its tender light dies down.
I will arise, before it grows too late,
And seek the noisy brilliance of the town.

These many waiting years I longed for gold,
Now must I needs console me with alloy.
Before this beauty fades, this pulse grows cold,
I may not love, I will at least enjoy!

Farewell, my Solitude of scented flowers,
Across whose glades the emerald parrots gleam,
Haunt of false hope, and home of wasted hours,
I am awake, at last,—Guard thou the dream!

The Rice-Boat

I SLEPT upon the Rice-boat
That, reef protected, lay
At anchor, where the palm-trees
Infringe upon the bay.
The windless air was heavy
With cinnamon and rose,
The midnight calm seemed waiting,
Too fateful for repose.

One joined me on the Rice-boat
With wild and waving hair,
Whose vivid words and laughter
Awoke the silent air.
Oh, beauty, bare and shining,
Fresh washen in the bay,
One well may love by moonlight
What one would not love by day!

Above among the cordage
The night wind hardly stirred,
The lapping of the ripples
Was all the sound we heard.

Love reigned upon the Rice-boat,
And Peace controlled the sea,
The spirit's consolation,
The senses' ecstasy.

Though many things and mighty
Are furthered in the West,
The ancient Peace has vanished
Before To-day's unrest.
For how among their striving,
Their gold, their lust, their drink,
Shall men find time for dreaming
Or any space to think?

Think not I scorn the Science
That lightens human pain;
Though man's reliance often
Is placed on it in vain.
Maybe the long endeavour,
The patience and the strife,
May some day solve the riddle,
The Mystery of Life.

Perchance I do not value
Things Western as I ought,
The trains,—that take us, whither?
The ships,—that reach, what port?
To me it seems but chaos
Of greed and haste and rage,

The endless, aimless, motion
Of squirrels in a cage.

Here, where some ruined temple
In solitude decays,
With carven walls still hallowed
With prayers of bygone days,
Here, where the coral outcrops
Make "flowers of the sea,"
The olden Peace yet lingers,
In hushed serenity.

Ah, silent, silver moonlight,
Whose charm impartial falls
On tanks of sacred water
And squalid city walls,
Whose mystic whiteness hallows
The lowest and the least,
To thee men owe the glamour
That draws them to the East.

And as this azure water,
Unflecked by wave or foam,
Conceals in its tranquillity
The dreaded white shark's home,
So if love be illusion
I ask the dream to stay,
Content to love by moonlight
What I might not love by day.

Lallji, My Desire

"*T*_{HIS} is no time for saying 'no' "
Were thy last words to me,
And yet my lips refused the kiss
They might have given thee.
How could I know
That thou wouldst go
To sleep so far from me?

They took thee to the Burning-Ghat,
Oh, Lallji, my desire.
And now a faint and lonely flame
Uprises from the pyre.
The thin grey smoke in spirals drifts
Across the opal sky.
Would that I were a wife of thine,
And thus with thee could die!
How could I know
That thou wouldst go,
Oh, Lallji, my desire?
The lips I missed
The flames have kissed
Upon the Sandal pyre.

If one should meet me with a knife
And cut my heart in twain,
Then would he see the smoke arise
From every severed vein.
Such is the burning, inward fire,
The anguish of my pain,
For my Beloved, whose dying lips
Implored a kiss—in vain!

How could I know
That thou wouldst go,
Oh, Lallji, my desire?
Too young thou art
To lay thy heart
Upon the Sandal pyre.

Thy wife awaits her coming child;
What were a child to me,
If I might take thee in these arms
And face the flames with thee?
The priests are chanting round the pyre,
At dusk they will depart
And leave to thee thy lonely rest,
To me my lonelier heart.

How could I know
Thou lovedst me so?
Upon the Sandal pyre
He lies forsaken.
The flames have taken
My Lallji, my desire!

Rutland Gate

His back is bent and his lips are blue,
Shivering out in the wet:
"Here's a florin, my man, for you,
Go and get drunk and forget!"

Right in the midst of a Christian land,
Rotted with wealth and ease,
Broken and dragged they let him stand
Till his feet on the pavement freeze.

God leaves His poor in His vicars' care,
For He hears the church-bells ring,
His ears are buzzing with constant prayer
And the hymns His people sing.

Can His pity picture the anguish here,
Can He see, through a London fog,
The man who has worked "nigh seventy year"
To die the death of a dog?

No one heeds him, the crowds pass on.
Why does he want to live?
"Take this florin, and get you gone,
Go and get drunk,—and forgive!"

Atavism

DEEP in the jungle vast and dim,
That knew not a white man's feet,
I smelt the odour of sun-warmed fur,
Musky, savage and sweet.

Far it was from the huts of men
And the grass where Sambur feed;
I threw a stone at a Kadapu tree
That bled as a man might bleed.

Scent of fur and colour of blood:—
And the long dead instincts rose,
I followed the lure of my season's mate,—
And flew, bare-fanged, at my foes.

* * *

Pale days: and a league of laws
Made by the whims of men.
Would I were back with my furry cubs
In the dusk of a jungle den.

Feroke

THE rice-birds fly so white, so silver white,
The velvet rice-flats lie so emerald green,
My heart inhales, with sorrowful delight,
The sweet and poignant sadness of the scene.

The swollen tawny river seeks the sea,
Its hungry waters, never satisfied,
Beflecked with fallen log and torn-up tree,
Engulf the fisher-huts on either side.

The current brought a stranger yesterday,
And laid him on the sand beneath a palm,
His worn young face was partly torn away,
His eyes, that saw the world no more, were calm.

We could not close his eyelids, stiff with blood,—
But, oh, my brother, I had changed with thee!
For I am still tormented in the flood,
Whilst thou hast done thy work, and reached the sea.

Sher Afzul

THIS was the tale Sher Afzul told to me,
While the spent camels bubbled on their knees,
And ruddy camp-fires twinkled through the gloom
Sweet with the fragrance from the Sinjib trees.

I had a friend who lay, condemned to death
In gaol for murder, wholly innocent,
Yet caught in webs of luckless circumstance;—
Thou know'st how lies, of good and ill intent,

Cluster like flies around a justice-court,
Wheel within wheel, revolving screw on screw;—
But from his prison he escaped and fled,
Keeping his liberty a night or two

Among the lonely hills, where, shackled still,
He braved a village, seeking for a file
To loose his irons; alas! he lost his life
Through the base sweetness of a woman's smile.

Lovely she was, and young, who gave the youth
Kind words, and promised succor and repose,

Till on the quilt of false security

He found exhausted sleep; but, ere he rose,

Entered the guards, brought by her messenger.

Thus was he captured, slain, and on her breast
Soon shone the guerdon of her treachery,

The price of blood; in gold made manifest.

I might have killed her? Brave men have died thus.

Revenge demanded keener punishment.

So I walked softly on those lilac hills,

Touching my *rhbab* lightly as I went.

I found her fair: 'twas no unpleasant task

In the young spring-time when the fruit-trees flower,
To pass her door, and pause, and pass again,
Shading mine eyes against her beauty's power.

Warmly I wooed her, while the almond trees

Broke into fragile clouds of rosy snow.

Her dawning passion feared her lord's return,

Ever she pleaded softly, "Let us go."

But I spoke tenderly, and said, "Beloved,

Shall not thy lips give orders to my heart?

Yet there is one small matter in these hills

Claiming attention ere I can depart.

"Let us not waste these days; thine absent lord

Cannot return, thou know'st, before the snow

Has melted, and the almond fruits appear."

This time she answered, "Naught but thee I know!"

I too was young; I could have loved her well

When her soft eyes across the twilight burned;
But suddenly, around her amber neck,
The golden beads would sparkle as she turned.

And I remembered; swift mine eyelids fell

To hide the hate that festered in my soul,
Ever more deeply, with the rising fear
That Love might wrench Revenge from my control.

But when at last she, acquiescent, lay

In the sweet-scented shadow of the firs,
Lovely and broken, granting—asking—all,
It was *his* eyes I met: not hers—not hers!

* * *

Three months I waited: all the village talked,

And ever anxiously she urged our flight.
Yet still I lingered, till her beauty paled,
And wearily she came to me at night.

Then, seeing Love, subservient to Revenge,

Had well achieved his own creative end,
And in his work must soon be manifest,
Compassing thus my duty to my friend,

One tranquil, sultry night I rode away
Till far behind the purple hills were dim,
Exulting in my spirit, "Thus I leave
Her to her fate, and my revenge to him!"

Swiftly he struck her, her lord; the body lay
With hacked-off breasts, dishonoured, in the Pass.
Months later, riding lonely through the gorge,
I saw it still, among the long-grown grass.

It was well done; my soul is satisfied.
Friendship is sweet, and Love is sweeter still,
But Vengeance has a savour all its own—
A strange delight—well known to those who kill.

Such was the story Afzul told to me,
While wood-fires crackled in the evening breeze,
And blows on hammered tent-pegs stirred the air
Sweet with the fragrance from the Sinjib trees.

Tent-like, above, up-held by jagged peaks,
The heavy purple of the tranquil sky
Shed its oft-broken promises of peace,
While twinkling stars bemoaned the worn-out lie!

Nay, Not To-night

NAY, not to-night;—the slow, sad rain is falling,
Sorrowful tears, beneath a grieving sky,
Far off a famished jackal, faintly calling,
Renders the dusk more lonely with its cry.

The mighty river rushes, sobbing, seawards,
The shadows shelter faint mysterious fears,
I turn mine eyes for consolation theowards,
And find thy lashes tremulous with tears.

If some new soul, asearch for incarnation,
Should, through our kisses, enter Life again,
It would inherit all our desolation,
All the soft sorrow of the slanting rain.

When thou desirest Love's supreme surrender,
Come while the morning revels in the light,
Bulbuls around us, passionately tender,
Singing among the roses red and white.

Thus, if it be my sweet and sacred duty,
Subservient to the Gods' divine decree,

To give the world again thy vivid beauty,
I should transmit it with my joy in thee.

I could not if I would, Beloved, deceive thee.
Wouldst thou not feel at once a feigned caress?
Yet, do not rise, I would not have thee leave me,
My soul needs thine to share its loneliness.

Let the dim starlight, when the low clouds sunder,
Silver the perfect outline of thy face.
Such faces had the saints; I only wonder
That thine has sought my heart for resting-place.

The Dying Prince

*T*HERE are no days for me any more, for the dawn is dark
with tears,
There is no rest for me any more, for the night is thick with
fears,
There are no flowers nor any fruit, for the sorrowful locusts
came,
And the garden is but a memory, the vineyard only a name.
There is no light in the empty sky, no sail upon the sea,
Birds are yet on their nests perchance, but they sing no
more to me.
Past—vanished—faded away—all the joys that were.
My youth died down in a swift decline when they married
her to despair.
“My lord, the crowd in the Audience Hall; how long wilt
thou have them wait?”
I have given my father’s younger son the guidance of the
State.
“The steeds are saddled, the Captains call for the orders of
the day.”
Tell them that I shall ride no more to the hunting or the
fray.

"Sweet the scent of the Moghra flowers"; Brother, it may
be so.

"The young, flushed spring is with us again." Is it? I did not
know.

"The Zamorin's daughter draweth near, on slender golden
feet";

Oh, a curse upon all sweet things say I, to whom they are
no more sweet!

Dost think that a man as sick as I can compass a woman's
ease?

That the sons of a man who is like to me could ever find
rest or peace?

Tell them to marry them where they will, if their longing
be so sore,

Such are the things that all men seek, but I shall seek no
more.

All my muscles are fallen in, and the blood deserts my
veins,

Every fibre and bone of me is waxen full of pains,

The iron feet of mine enemy's curse are heavy upon my
head,

Look at me and judge for thyself, thou seest I am but dead.

"Then, who is it, Prince, who has done this thing, has sown
such a bitter seed,

That we hale him forth to the Market-place, bind him and
let him bleed,

That the flesh may shudder and wince and writhe, reddening 'neath the rod."
Love is the evil-doer, alas! and how shalt thou scourge a
God?

I Arise and Go Down to the River

I ARISE and go down to the River, and currents that come
from the sea,
Still fresh with the salt of the ocean, are lovely and precious
to me,
The waters are silver and silent, except where the kingfisher
dips,
Or the ripples wash off from my shoulder the reddening stain
of thy lips.

Two things make my joy at this moment: thy gold-coloured
beauty by night,
And the delicate charm of the River, all pale in the day-
breaking light,
So cool are the waters' caresses. Ah, which is the lovelier,—
this?
Or the fire that it kindles at midnight, beneath the soft glow
of thy kiss?

Ah, Love has a mighty dominion, he forges with passionate
breath
The links which stretch out to the Future, with forces of life
and of death,

But great is the charm of the River, so soft is the sigh of the reeds,
They give me, long sleepless from passion, the peace that my weariness needs.

I float on the breast of my River, and startle the birds on the
edge,
To land on a newly found island, a boat that is caught in the
sedge,
The rays of the sun are still level, not yet has the heat of the
day
Deflowered the mists of the morning, that linger in delicate
grey.

What land was his dwelling whose fancy first gave unto Par-
adise birth?
He never had swum in my River, or else he had fixed it on
earth!
Oh, grace of the palm-tree reflections, oh, sense of the wind
from the sea!
Oh, divine and serene exultation of one who is lonely and
free!

Ah, delicate breezes of daybreak, so scentless, refreshing and
free!
And yet—had my midnight been lonely you had been less
lovely to me.
This coolness comes laden with solace, because I am hot from
the fire,
As often devotion to virtue arises from sated desire.

*Gautama came forth from his Palace; he felt the night wind
on his face,
He loathed, as he left, the embraces, the softness and scent of
the place,
But, ah, if his night had been loveless, with no one to solace
his need,
He never had written that sermon which men so devotedly
read.*

Ah, River, thy gentle persuasion; I doubt if I seek any more
The beauty that hurts me and holds me beneath the low roof
on the shore.

I loved thee, ay, loved—for a season, but thou, was it love or
desire,
The glow of the Sun in his glory, or only the heat of a fire?

I think not that thou wilt regret me, for thou art too joyous
and fair,
So many are keen to caress thee, thy passionate midnights to
share.

Thou wilt not have time to remember, before a new love-
knot is tied,
The stranger who loved thee and left thee, who drifted away
on the tide.

Two things I have found that are lovely, though most things
are sullen and grey;
One: Peace—but what mortal has found him; and Passion
—but when would he stay?

So I shall return to my River, and floating at ease on its
breast,
Shall find, what Love never has given—a sense of most in-
finite rest.

When the years have gone by and departed, what thought
shall I keep of this land?
A curl of thy waist-reaching tresses? a flower received from
thy hand?
Nay, if I can fathom the future, I fancy my relic will be
Some shell, my beloved one, the River has stol'n from the
store of the sea.

Listen, Beloved

LISTEN, Beloved, the Casurinas quiver,
Each tassel prays the wind to set it free,
Hark to the frantic sobbing of the river,
Wild to attain extinction in the sea.
All Nature blindly struggles to dissolve
In other forms and forces, thus to solve
The painful riddle of identity.
Ah, that my soul might lose itself in thee!

Yet, my Beloved One, wherefore seek I union,
Since there is no such thing in all the world,—
Are not our spirits linked in close communion,—
And on my lips thy clinging lips are curled?
Thy tender arms are round my shoulders thrown,
I hear thy heart more loudly than my own,
And yet, to my despair, I know thee far,
As in the stellar darkness, star from star.

Even in times when love with bounteous measure
A simultaneous joy on us has shed,
In the last moment of delirious pleasure,
Ere the sense fail, or any force be fled,

My rapture has been even as a wall,
Shutting out any thought of thee at all!
My being, by its own delight possessed,
Forgot that it was sleeping on thy breast.

Ay, from his birth each man is vowed and given
To a vast loneliness, ungauged, unspanned,
Whether by pain and woe his soul be riven,
Or all fair pleasures clustered 'neath his hand.
His gain by day, his ecstasy by night,—
His force, his folly, fierce or faint delight,—
Suffering or sorrow, fortune, feud, or care,—
Whate'er he find or feel,—he may not share.

Lonely we join the world, and we depart
Even as lonely, having lived alone,
The breast that feeds us, the beloved one's heart,
The lips we kiss,—or curse—alike unknown.
Ay, even these lips of thine, so often kissed,
What certitude have I that they exist?
Alas, it is the truth, though harsh it seems,
I have been loved as sweetly in my dreams.

Therefore if I should seem too fiercely fond,
Too swift to love, too eager to attain,
Forgive the fervour that would forage beyond
The limits set to mortal joy and pain.
Knowing the soul's unmeasured loneliness,

My passion must be mingled with distress,
As I, despairing, struggle to draw near
What is as unattainable as dear.

Thirst may be quenched at any kindly river,
Rest may be found 'neath any arching tree.
No sleep allures, no draughts of love deliver
My spirit from its aching need of thee.
Thy sweet assentiveness to my demands,
All the caressive touches of thy hands,—
These soft cool hands, with fingers tipped with fire,—
They can do nothing to assuage desire.

Sometimes I think my longing soul remembers
A previous love to which it aims and strives,
As if this fire of ours were but the embers
Of some wild flame burnt out in former lives.
Perchance in earlier days I *did* attain
That which I seek for now so all in vain,
Maybe my soul with thine *was* fused and wed
In some great night, long since dissolved and dead.

We may progress; but who shall answer clearly
The riddle of the endless change of things.
Perchance in other days men loved more dearly,
Or Love himself had wider ways and wings,
Maybe we gave ourselves with less control,
Or simpler living left more free the soul,

So that with ease the flesh aside was flung,—
Or was it merely that *Mankind was young*?

Or has my spirit a divine prevision
Of vast vague passions stored in days to be,
When some strong souls shall conquer their division
And two shall be as one, eternally?
Finding at last upon each other's breast,
Unutterable calm and infinite rest,
While love shall burn with so intense a glow
That both shall die, and neither heed or know.

Why do I question thus, and wake confusion
In the soft thought that lights thy perfect face,
Ah, shed once more thy perfumed hair's profusion,
Open thine arms and make my resting place.
Lay thy red lips on mine as heretofore,
Grant me the treasure of thy beauty's store,
Stifle all thought in one imperious kiss,—
What shall I ask for more than this,— and this?

Vayu the Wind

AH, Wind, I have always loved thee
 Since those far off nights
When I lay beneath the vines
 A prey to strange delights,
For among my tresses
Thy soft caresses
 Were sweet as a lover's to me.

Later thou grewest more wanton, or I more shy,
And after the bath I drew my garments close,
Fearing thy soft persuasion amongst my hair,
When thou camest fresh with the scent of some ruffled rose.

Ah, Wind, thou hast lain with the Desert,
 I know her savour well,
And the spices wherewith she scents her breasts—
She who has known such countless lovers
Yet rarely borne a city among her sands—
 Thou comest as one from a night of love,
 Thy breath is broken and hard,—
Bringing echoes of lonely things,
 Vast and cruel, that the soft and golden sands
 Buried beneath thin ripples so long ago.

Ah, Wind, thou hast given me lovely things,
 The scent of a thousand flowers,

And the heavy perfume of pollen-laden fields,
Strange snatches of wild song from the heart of the dark
Bazaar

That thrilled to my very core,
Till I threw the sheet aside and rose to follow,—
But whither, or what?

Also, Wind, thou broughtest the breath of the sea,
The sound of its myriad waves.
And in nights when I lay on the lonely sands
Stretching mine arms to thee,
Thou gavest me something—faint and vast and sweet,
Something ineffable, wistful, from far away,
Elsewhere—Beyond—

And thou wast kind to me in my times of love,
Cooling my lips
That my lover wore away,
While, wafting the scent from his divided hair,
Thou show'dst the stars between
Far away, and eclipsed by his burning eyes
Even the stars.

And now I almost foresee the place and the hour
When I shall open my dying lips to thee
And receive a last cool kiss.
Afterwards, Wind, since I have always loved thee,—
Whirl my dust to the scented heart of a moghra flower,
His flower, but, ah, thou knowest,—
So often thy kisses have mingled with his and mine.

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